THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 6 March, 1924 Number 3

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By N. LENIN

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World of Labour :: Book Reviews

Published at
162 BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD, LONDON, S.W. 1

PRICE SIXPENCE

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Published at

162 Buckingham Palace Road

London

S.W.1

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The Labour Monthly

Editorial and Publishing Offices:

162 BUCKINGHAM PALACE RD., S.W.1

Telephone: VICTORIA 9193.

¶ The Editor of *The Labour Monthly* invites contributions. He cannot, however, be held responsible for MSS. sent to him, or undertake to enter into correspondence regarding rejected contributions, although every endeavour will be made to return the same when a stamped and addressed envelope for that purpose is enclosed.

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Ordinary (unspecified) position, £5 5s. per page, and *pro rata.*

Special position (facing matter), £7 7s. Cover, £8 8s. Small advertisements on last page of text, £1 1s. per inch. Discount for series.

Volume V (July to December, 1923) can be supplied for 7s. 6d. post free, or these numbers can be bound and returned post free for 4s. 6d.

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NOTES of the MONTH

Barbarian Tributes—The Bankruptcy of the non-Marxian World—Walls of Ignorance—A Play and a Moral—The Outlook for England—Lenin and Marx—The Spirit of Leninism—The Tactics of Leninism—The Teachings of Leninism—Lenin and the Future

TO write of Lenin in English is like a barbarian endeavouring to describe a civilised man. The very atmosphere and language is so soaked in conventional and insincere relics of bourgeois thought in decay that it is almost impossible to drive through them to the profoundly simple and tremendously significant things for which Lenin stood. In all the tributes that have appeared in his memory in English, and there have been many not lacking in goodwill and sincerity, there has been something unreal and unconvincing, as if the stale counters of tribute to a "great man" or "great leader" (compared according to fancy with a Cromwell or a Cæsar or a Napoleon) were being brought out once again, or, where there has been any attempt at an alternative to this, as if the great achievement were an innovation in political theory or institutions. In the light of any sense of the gigantic historic change in human development that is taking place in our day, and of the part of Lenin in it, there is something pitiful in this inadequacy. It is a weakness that is too great to be the individual weakness of this or that writer; its very universality makes it a symptom of a deeper lying condition. It is the real inadequacy of the savage's thousand-word vocabulary to express the true content of a play of Shakespeare save in a child's summary of the plot. It is the failure of a social epoch to understand or express the next, when confronted with it.

FOR in a profoundly true sense the civilisation of Western Europe and America, not merely the outer shell, but the whole thought and expression, is barbarous in relation to the real forces that are making the world—barbarous in the strictest and most primitive sense, that is, ignorant, unconscious, and self-centred, without historic sense or understanding. This is not merely

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a question of the philistines ; it is the " intelligent," " educated," " well-informed," " advanced " opinion that is the most plainly barbarous. The coarsely practical leaders of the bourgeoisie are in comparison consciously aware of the world forces with which they have to deal. But the intellectual expression of the bourgeoisie, which dominates in the West not only liberal opinion but also the " socialist " movement, is no longer capable of living in the present and has not been since the time of Marx. The world war first made plainly visible to all this complete intellectual bankruptcy of all sections of bourgeois society, equally militarist and pacifist. But if the world war was the crisis which laid bare the situation, the Russian Revolution was already the new chapter of world history advancing forward and leaving behind the whole framework of bourgeois thought. From that moment bourgeois thought was turned in upon itself in sterility, its little war-time dreams of social reconstruction left shattered in fragments on the ground by the harsh blows of reality, and itself left gazing with wondering incomprehension at the nightmare of the post-war world or clinging with desperate devotion to some abstract shadowy wraith of a League of Nations or similar shibboleth to soothe its pain. In the events in Russia it could only see at the most a gigantic social " experiment," and in Lenin a " ruthless " but " fascinating " and " masterful " figure. This pathetic helplessness and futility before the march of world events is only the culminating expression of the mental and moral bankruptcy of the non-Marxian world, the visible picture of which Shaw drew with such devastating bitterness of heart (for he himself is part of it) in *Heartbreak House*.

MARXISM is to the Western world a book closed with seven seals. How, then, shall they understand Leninism which carries Marxism a whole age forward ? If they have not known that merciless social self-analysis which is Marxism to prepare their minds, how shall they understand that consequent positive power and certainty of action which is Leninism ? It is better to leave them to their schoolbook admiration of Lenin as a " Cæsar," a " Cromwell." But the workers must understand, or perish. They are already groping their way towards an understanding under the hard pressure of events.

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But there can be no complete understanding without theory: and that theoretical clearness which should be within reach of every thinking and inquiring worker does not yet exist in this country. Instead, the theory of the working-class movement is still derived from bourgeois sources—from Keynes, Russell, Angell, Cole, Brailsford, Hobson, &c.—and among even the most intelligent savants of the bourgeoisie there is not so much as a notion of the A B C of Marxism, that is to say of the simplest elements of the working-class position and of the forces of society and history. It is still possible for a Bertrand Russell to produce as a witty reply to the Materialist Conception of History the suggestion that not even a supporter would agree that the theory was only a reflection of Marx feeling cold and hungry in the British Museum. It is still possible for a Keynes to announce with all the brilliance of a new discovery the self-destructive processes of capitalism, and to believe that he has found something unguessed at by the crude and "bloodthirsty" notions of Marxism. "Perhaps it is historically true that no order of society ever perishes save by its own hand. In the complexer world of Western Europe the Immanent Will may achieve its ends more subtly and bring in the revolution no less inevitably through a Klotz or a George than by the intellectualisms, too ruthless and self-conscious for us, of the bloodthirsty philosophers of Russia." That sentence deserves to stand as a monument of the noble savage who by a bound of intuition reaches out of his own genius to some shred of modern civilised knowledge, although unable to express it save in his own queer fetichistic language—Immanent Will, &c. But when such is the state of knowledge among the most brilliant of the barbarians, what is to be hoped of those who have to depend on them for their understanding?

RECENTLY there appeared a play from Czecho-Slovakia which received a vogue of attention and discussion—*R. U. R.* by Karel Capek. That play and its reception abroad and here afforded in many ways an interesting index of stages of development in different parts of Europe. The play itself was a typical expression of post-war Central Europe. Under the guise of the awakening to consciousness of a race of machine-men or Robots, created for labour, and their slaying of their creators, he

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presented the revolt of the proletariat. The play was strangely and revealingly unequal. The first part (the part which has already taken place in Central Europe) was strong. The rule of the bourgeoisie and its sophistries, the long dumb servitude of Labour, the first fussy efforts of bourgeois liberalism (the " Humanity League " lady) to awaken their soul, the gradual real stirring and straining of the giant after consciousness, the first helpless paroxysms of anger and indignation without expression, the slow painful learning of discipline and sacrifice and collective power, the degradation of the bourgeoisie and their division between policies of coercion and corruption, the poison and suspense of the whole atmosphere, the raising of the standard of revolt and the transformation of the harmless bourgeois individuals into mad demons of white terror, shooting and drinking in alternate fits of panic and exultation—all this was depicted with rapid power. But thereafter the play broke down. The author could see the new force that was rising; but he could only see it from outside. He could not see from within it, ahead to the secrets of its own future creation. For his play the moment of tragedy was the slow extinguishing of the lamp of the old civilisation. Beyond that for a solution he could only hark back to a reversion and a repetition—the threadbare re-discovery of individual romantic love like a nineteenth-century comedy drama. This pathetic collapse was one of the most significant features of the play. For it made it a veritable picture of Central Europe, that has trembled on the very edge of revolution and shrunk back in fear to ineffectual commonness. It was not a great play, but it was a revealing play. But when this play was acted in London, nine-tenths of the criticism and discussions centred on the conception of the " machine-man " to do all the work (as if it were a dramatisation of Lytton's *Coming Race*) and the remaining tenth saw only a picture of the coming cataclysm.

IT is this universal unconsciousness which is the most terrible fact in modern England. For on the Continent of Europe there is at least a certain standard of realist seeing what is happening in the world, such as can develop, is already beginning to develop into a common mass understanding. And America, which is as stupid and primitive in its conventional outlook as England, has at

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any rate at present limitless reserves of fat, in the shape of untapped wealth and territory, to enable it to continue to be stupid for some time without paying the cost. But England enjoys neither of these positions, and therefore the outlook for England is terrible. The old monopolist position of industrial and financial supremacy, of the workshop of the world and of unchallenged empire and easy tribute, is gone for ever. And the new understanding of conditions to-day and the future of development is not yet come. Neither in the bourgeoisie nor in the proletariat is there any beginning of awareness. Alike in bourgeois and proletarian politics the old conventional watchwords of before the war still reign. In the face of the gigantic economic crisis of after the war, all the old pills from Protection to Social Reconstruction are produced. And meanwhile the suffering and decline go on to future starvation. The penalty of ignorance is never remitted or forgiven. The need of Marxism, of Leninism, in England, as in all the world to-day, is not the need of a particular theory or creed. It is a social need, the need of a practical understanding of world conditions and the future line of human development.

IT is this practical understanding, this union of understanding and action in the world sphere, which is the most characteristic mark of Leninism. Leninism is social thinking in action. What Marx saw, Lenin achieved. Marx taught the working class to think ; Lenin taught them how to fight and win. Marx showed how to understand history ; Lenin how to make history. Without Lenin, Marxism, in the hands of his successors, would have degenerated into a pedants' creed, covering the grossest actual corruption and opportunism on the one hand, and the sterile emptiness of revolutionary formulas on the other. Lenin brought back to Marxism the spark of life and struggle, which had been the first principle of Marx himself, and made it live again in terms of our own day, in terms of imperialism and world war, of economic crisis and the modern labour movements, of the seizure of power, of parliament and soviets, and the first workers' State. Leninism is the realisation of Marxism in our own day. Between them, Marx and Lenin are the architects of the new world order which is

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beginning, and at whose birth we are assisting all over the earth. Through all the turmoil of the post-war world, through all the scramble and confusion of narrow, grasping imperialisms and financial and diplomatic intrigues, the one great positive force working consistently for world ends has been and remains the Communist International, the creation and enbodiment of the spirit of Lenin and all for which he stood.

WHAT was the content of Lenin's teaching? It is easier to analyse the content than to convey again the spirit and the secret. For the greatest gift of Lenin to the working-class movement was the new spirit he brought into it and kindled within it all over the world. To movements grown old and dull and paralysed under the long-drawn corruption of imperialism, forgetful of their original aims and impulse, overlaid with dead inheritances, lost and befogged in a maze of detail and the trickeries of bourgeois machinery, with their leaders corrupt or petty and the workers despairing or apathetic, Lenin brought back the spirit of the revolution; he kindled anew within the breasts of millions of workers and peasants all over the world the resolve to struggle for great ends and defeat the miseries of human life, the power to lift up their eyes and go forward without fear, the determination to overcome all obstacles and achieve, the courage and clearness and confidence of Marxism in action, the spirit of victory. But the secret of Leninism is only to be learnt, not from principles, but from the problems of the daily struggle as he waged it and as it continues to be waged; the knowledge and power to estimate social forces for action, to advance and to retreat; the whole new and hitherto uncharted science which in the thirty-five years of his fighting life and the twenty volumes of his writings he was daily elaborating and revealing—the tactics of the revolution.

THE tactics of the revolution is not for fools; and it may safely be prophesied that as much fantastic and debasing use will be endeavoured to be made of the principles of Leninism in the future as has been made of the principles of

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Marxism in the past. Hideous things will be proclaimed and advocated in the name of Leninism. All the traitors to socialist principles will endeavour to hide themselves behind the shadow of the man who was bigger than formulas. The audacious compromises of an indomitable fighter will be made the excuse for the dirty compacts of petty bargainers and timid self-seekers. Already the vultures have gathered around. The very types and characters whom he flogged and lashed without mercy in his formidable polemics, the parliamentarians and tricksters, the centrists and opportunists, have already begun to endeavour to claim him as their own, have begun to canonise him as they canonised Marx. Those who began by denouncing him as a fanatical doctrinaire end by acclaiming him as a hero of compromise. Their object, beneath their contradictory statements, is in either case the same : to cover up their own shameful policies. Let the Revolution beware. As against the treatment meted out to Marx, Lenin has this advantage, that he has left behind him a powerful and united organisation to carry on his fight, a union of the revolutionary workers all over the world, the Communist International, which exists to maintain the struggle for which he gave his life.

BUT against such traducers even the formal content of Lenin's teaching may be recalled. It may be recalled most easily by considering where socialism stood as Marx left it and how Lenin carried it on. Marx had revealed the dominant rôle of the class struggle in hitherto existing social relationships ; he had laid bare the character of capitalist production and exploitation, and its development to increasing concentration and larger and larger scale anarchy and crisis ; he had established the rôle of the organisation of the working class developing in its at first unconscious struggles the new society in the womb of the old, and raised the challenge of the international organisation of the workers across all national and racial frontiers ; and he had pointed finally to the inevitable catastrophe of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the working class, leading to the new society of social production and endeavour which would end the reign of class struggle and begin the history of civilised humanity.

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All this Lenin carried forward to the new period which followed on the death of Marx, and translated into precise and concrete terms of our own day, adding a clearness and vividness of immediate struggle which could not be present in the first elaboration of the general principles before the conflict was ripe. He showed the realisation of the class struggle in the final stage of civil war and the destruction of the state power of capitalism and its replacement by the workers' state. He showed the culmination of capitalism in imperialism, the accompanying concentration of economic and political power, the new rôle of the subject populations in Asia and Africa, the new problems presented to the world working class, and the final completion in an inevitable chain of world war and revolution. He showed the realisation of the final catastrophe of capitalism in world war, the consequent tasks of the International, and the historic moment of revolution. He showed the concrete form of the revolution in the seizure of State power by the workers' own organisations of the type of the workers' councils or soviets. And he showed the supreme necessity both before and after the revolution of a single disciplined revolutionary party of the workers to unite the working-class struggle in all its aspects and concentrate it on to the supreme political struggle with the single, disciplined, united organ of bourgeois power, the State, and the establishment and maintenance of the workers' State. All this Lenin showed, and at the same time that he showed he fought and achieved. He built with his own hands from the tiniest foundations the revolutionary party of the Russian workers which led the way for the world. He raised alone the standard of working-class revolt in the universal collapse of European socialist treachery and opportunism and pacifism in the world war. He hewed out the path of the first working-class revolution to the seizure of state power and the realisation of the first workers' state. He stood at the head in maintaining the first workers' state against the universal attack of world imperialism and counter-revolution. He rallied the workers of the whole world to the revolutionary struggle, and left behind him his monument in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics covering one-sixth of the territory of the world and the Communist International uniting the militant workers of every land.

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TO anyone surveying Lenin's record of thought and action it is clear that he represented more than a personal force, that in all his speeches and writings and deeds he was the expression of all the deepest inner force of the revolutionary working class all over the world, and that this is the secret of his power. He was the expression of the greatest need and of the greatest driving force of our age. That Materialist Conception of History, that supreme social consciousness overstepping all the limits of individual greatness and smallness and pointing the equal way for all to what must be achieved, that mighty conception which Marx first proclaimed, and proclaiming ended for ever the reign of all the old individual, romantic, and subjective philosophies and politics—that conception he embodied as a living personal force acting in world history. He was the working class in action, with all the shackles and fetters fallen : he was the spirit of the future age living and acting to-day. And, therefore, the workers of the whole world do honour and will do honour to him, because in doing so they do honour to all that is most real and most imperishable in themselves and their own future.

R. P. D.

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RAMSAY MACDONALD AND THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

By N. LENIN

This article by Lenin, now for the first time published in England, was written in reply to an article by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald that appeared in l'Humanité, *then the organ of the French Socialist Party, on April* 14, 1919. *The Second International had held its first post-war Conference at Berne, in February of that year; and the First Congress of the Communist International had taken place in March. In order to enable our readers to appreciate fully Lenin's criticism of the tendencies represented by Mr. MacDonald, we reproduce in full, herewith, the latter's original article :—*

It has been the ill fortune of the Socialist movement, both in its national and in its international policy, to be the prey of tendencies towards division.

However, it is not a bad thing that there should be shades of opinion and variations in method. Our Socialism is still in the experimental stage.

Its general principles are fixed, but the way best to apply them, the methods which will bring the triumph of the revolution, the manner in which the Socialist State should be constructed, are still questions for discussion, on which the last word has not yet been said. A profound study of these questions will bring us to a greater appreciation of the truth.

Extremes may conflict with each other, and their conflicts may serve to strengthen the conceptions of Socialism, but the evil begins when the one regards the other as a traitor, as a believer who has fallen from grace and on whom the Party should close its doors.

When Socialists are possessed by a dogmatic spirit comparable to that which formerly in Christianity preached civil war for the glory of God and the destruction of the Devil, then the bourgeoisie can live in peace, for the period of its domination is not yet over, whatever local or national Socialist successes may be gained at the moment.

To-day our movement has unhappily encountered another obstacle. A new International has been founded at Moscow.

I regret it very much, for at the present moment the Socialist International is sufficiently broad to include all forms of Socialist thought, and, in spite of the theoretical and practical controversies raised by Bolshevism, I see no reason why the Left should separate itself from the Centre and form an independent group.

We must first remember that we are still in the period of the Revolution's infancy. The forms of government resulting from the political and social destruction of the war are not yet tested and are not definitely fixed.

The first sweep of the broom always seems remarkable, but one is not sure of its effectiveness.

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Russia is not Hungary, Hungary is not France, France is not England, and to split the International over the experience of one nation shows a criminal narrow-mindedness.

Moreover, what is the value of the Russian experience ? Who can speak of it ? The Allied Governments are afraid to let us go and find out for ourselves. But two things we do know :—

The first is, that there was no plan carefully thought out for the Revolution made by the present Russian Government. It developed with the march of events. Lenin began the attack on Kerensky by demanding a Constituent Assembly. Events led him to suppress this Assembly. When the Social Revolution took place in Russia, no one thought that the Soviets would play the part in the government that they have played.

Consequently Lenin correctly exhorted Hungary not to imitate Russia slavishly, but to let the Hungarian Revolution develop along its own lines.

The changes and developments in the experiments we are at present witnessing must not at any cost bring a split in the International.

All the Socialist Governments need the aid and the counsel of the International. The International needs to watch over their experiments with a careful eye and an open mind.

I have just heard from a friend who has recently seen Lenin that no one criticises the Soviet Government more freely then Lenin himself.

* * *

If the disturbances and the revolutions after the war do not justify a split, is it justified by the attitude of certain sections of Socialism during the war ? Here I candidly confess that the reason may seem more cogent. But if there is really a reason for a split in the International, the Moscow Conference put the question in the worst possible way.

I am one of those who hold that the discussion at Berne on war-responsibility was *only a concession to non-Socialist public opinion.*

Not only could no judgment of any historical value (though it might have had some political value) have been pronounced at Berne, but the subject itself was not approached as it should have been.

A condemnation of the German majority (which it fully deserved and which I should have been most happy to support) could not have been an exposure of the origins of the war.

The Berne debates brought no frank discussion of the attitude of the other Socialists towards the war.

They gave no formula for Socialist conduct during a war. All that the International had hitherto said was that in a war of national defence Socialists should unite with other parties.

Under these conditions whom were we to condemn ?

Some among us knew that what the International had said meant nothing and was not a practical guide for action.

We knew that such a war would end by an imperialist victory, and, without being either pacifists, in the ordinary sense of the word, or anti-pacifists, we pursued a policy which we thought to be the only one compatible with internationalism. But the International never prescribed this policy for us.

That is why, when the war began, the International collapsed. It had no authority, and laid down no law by virtue of which we could to-day condemn those who honestly carried out the decisions of the Congresses of the International.

In consequence the position we must adopt to-day is as follows : instead of making a split over past events, build a really active International which will protect the Socialist movement during the period of revolution and reconstruction, through which we are about to pass.

We must re-establish our Socialist principles. We must lay the solid foundations of International Socialist policy.

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After this, if we find that we are in essential disagreement over these principles, if we do not see eye to eye as regards liberty and democracy, if we have definitely divergent views about the conditions in which the working class can exercise power, if the war has tainted certain sections of the International with imperialism, then the split can take place.

However, I do not think that such a calamity will occur.

Consequently I regret the Moscow manifesto as being at least premature and certainly useless, and I hope that my French comrades, who have borne with me the calumnies and sorrows of the last four tragic years, will not, in a moment of impatience, contribute to the destruction of international solidarity.

Their children will have to re-construct it if the working class is ever to rule the world.

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD.

THE author of this article, as the reader can see, attempts to prove that the split is superfluous. As a matter of fact the very opposite is proved by the reasoning of Ramsay MacDonald, typical representative as he is of the Second International, and worthy colleague of Scheidemann and Kautsky, Vandervelde, Branting, and the rest of them.

Ramsay MacDonald's article is the best example that could be given of that smooth, melodious, banal, and socialist-seeming phraseology which serves in all developed capitalist countries to camouflage the policy of the bourgeoisie inside the Labour Movement.

I

Let us start off with a point which is perhaps the least important, but which is, on second thoughts, particularly characteristic. The author, like Kautsky (in his brochure *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*), repeats the bourgeois lie alleging that the part played by the Soviets in Russia was not anticipated ; alleging also that the Bolsheviks and myself only began the fight with Kerensky in the name of the Constituent Assembly.

Now that is a bourgeois lie. In reality, as early as April 4, 1917, on the first day of my arrival at Petrograd, I put forward theses demanding a Soviet Republic and not a bourgeois Parliamentary Republic. I repeated that on many occasions during the Kerensky period both at meetings and in the Press. The Bolshevik Party made a solemn and official declaration to this effect in the resolutions of its conference of April 29, 1917. Not to know this means *not to wish to know* the truth concerning the Socialist revolution in Russia ;

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not to wish to understand that a bourgeois republic in conjunction with a Constituent Assembly represents a step forward in comparison with the same kind of a republic *without* a Constituent Assembly; whilst a Soviet Republic means two steps forward in comparison with the above. To fail to see this is to close one's eyes to the difference between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

To call oneself a Socialist and yet not to be able to see this difference two years after the question came to the fore in Russia, and a year and a-half after the victory of the Soviet revolution, is (in MacDonald's phrase) to remain obstinately a prisoner of "non-Socialist public opinion," that is to say, of bourgeois politics and ideas.

A split with such people is necessary and inevitable, for it is impossible to accomplish a Socialist revolution hand in hand with those who incline towards the bourgeoisie.

If "leaders" such as Ramsay MacDonald, Kautsky, and others have no wish to overcome even the little difficulties which would be presented by a study of the documents concerning the attitude of the Bolsheviks to the Soviet Government, and concerning the question as it appeared on and after November 7, 1917, would it not be ridiculous to expect of such men readiness and ability to overcome the incomparably greater difficulties of the struggle for a Socialist revolution?

None so deaf as those who will not hear.

II

Let us pass on to the second out of the numberless lies of which Ramsay MacDonald's article is full to overflowing; for it certainly contains more untruths than it does words. This second lie is, moreover, almost the most important of all.

Ramsay MacDonald asserts that up to the war of 1914-1918 all that the International said was to the effect that "when war assumes the character of a war of national defence, Socialists should unite with other parties."

Now that is a monstrous and revolting perversion of the truth.

Everybody knows that the Basle Manifesto of 1912 was unanimously accepted by all Socialists, and that of all the documents

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of the International this is the only one which refers directly to this war between the two groups, English and German, of imperialist robbers, a war for which the preparations were obvious to us in 1912, and which actually broke out in 1914. It was concerning this very war that the Basle Manifesto laid down three fundamental truths; in remaining silent about these MacDonald commits the greatest crime against Socialism, and proves the necessity of a split with men of his type. In reality such people serve the bourgeoisie and not the proletariat.

These three truths are as follow:—

(1) The war that is threatening the world can in no way be justified by a shadowy "interest of national defence."

(2) It would be a crime on the part of the workers to shoot one another in such a war.

(3) War leads to the proletarian revolution.

By "forgetting" these three basic root axioms (notwithstanding that he had endorsed them prior to the war), MacDonald in fact goes over to the service of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, and thus shows that a split is imperative.

The Communist International will not unite with Parties which do not wish to acknowledge these truths and which are not capable of proving, by their actions, that they are steadfast, ready, and able to impress these truths on the conscience of the masses.

The Versailles Peace proved even to the deaf and to the blind, proved even to the mass of the short-sighted, that the Entente was and is an imperialist vulture as bloody and as terrible as Germany. To fail to see this is only possible either to those hypocrites and liars who consciously pursue a bourgeois policy in the Labour Movement, who are direct agents and servants of the bourgeoisie ("'Labour lieutenants of the capitalist class," as the American Socialists call them), or to people who are the slaves of bourgeois ideas and influence to such an extent that they are Socialists only in words, whilst in reality they are petty bourgeois philistines and hangers-on of capitalism. The difference between the first and second categories is important only from a personal point of view, that is to say, from the point of view of the criticism directed against any John or Peter, social patriots in no matter what country. As far as politics are concerned, that is to say, from the point of

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view of the relations between millions of people, between classes, this difference is absolutely unessential.

Those Socialists who, during the war of 1914-1918, did not understand that this war was criminal and reactionary, that it was a war of rapine, in which both sides pursued imperialist aims, are social patriots, *i.e.*, they are Socialists as far as words are concerned, but patriots in deed; they are friends of the working class only in words, in reality they are the lackeys of their "own" national bourgeoisie, assisting the latter to deceive the people by depicting as "a national war," "a war of liberation," "a war of defence," "a just war," &c., the war between the two groups of English and German imperialist bandits, both *equally* foul, equally mercenary, equally bloodthirsty, criminal, and reactionary.

Unity with the social patriots is treason to the revolution, treason to the proletariat, treason to Socialism, because it means unity with the *national bourgeoisie* of one's "own" country *against* the unity of the *international* revolutionary proletariat; it means, in a word, unity *with* the bourgeoisie *against* the proletariat.

The war of 1914-1918 has finally proved the truth of this. He who has failed to understand this had better stick in Berne with the yellow "International" of the social traitors.

III

Ramsay MacDonald declares, with the entertaining *naïveté* of a parlour Socialist, who speaks in the air without the least conception in the world that his words have a serious bearing, without in any way understanding that *words compel action*—"At Berne a concession was made to non-Socialist public opinion."

Just so! We consider the Berne "International" altogether yellow, false, and perfidious, for the whole of its policy is nothing but a "concession" to the bourgeoisie.

Ramsay MacDonald knows perfectly well that we have established the Third International and have broken unreservedly with the Second because we have become convinced of the desperate and incorrigible state of the latter as well as of its rôle as the hand-maid of Imperialism, and as a means for spreading bourgeois influence, bourgeois lies, and bourgeois corruption within the

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Labour Movement. If when wishing to discuss the Third International, Ramsay MacDonald evades the heart of the matter, beats about the bush, uttering empty phrases and omitting to say what should be said—then he is committing an error and a crime. For the proletariat needs the truth, and there is nothing more harmful to its cause than a plausible, respectable, ordinary lie.

The question of Imperialism and of its *relation* with opportunism within the Labour Movement, and with the betrayal of the cause of the workers by their own leaders, has been put a long, long time ago.

During a period of fifty years, from 1842 to 1892, Marx and Engels constantly emphasised the fact that owing to England's peculiar economic position (her colonies, monopoly of the world market, &c.) the upper strata of the working class of that country had gradually come to occupy almost as privileged a position as the bourgeoisie. In the seventies of the last century Marx won for himself the hatred—which did him honour—of the heroes of the "Berne International" of those days, that is to say of the opportunists and reformists, because he had branded many leaders of the English trade unions as men who had sold themselves to the bourgeoisie, or who were paid for the services they rendered to the bourgeoisie from within the Labour Movement.

At the time of the Anglo-Boer war, the English Press had already put with the greatest clearness the question of Imperialism as the newest (and last) stage of capitalism. If my memory does not deceive me it was no other than Ramsay MacDonald himself who then left the Fabian Society, that prototype of the Berne International, that nursery and pattern of opportunism, which Engels with brilliant force, clarity, and truth in his correspondence with Zorge called "Fabian Imperialism." "Fabian Imperialism" was at that time a current expression in English Socialist literature. If Ramsay MacDonald has forgotten this, so much the worse for him.

"Fabian Imperialism" and "Socialist Imperialism" are one and the same thing. It is Socialism in word and Imperialism in deed. *It is the transformation of fully developed opportunism into Imperialism.* To-day, during and after the war of 1914-1918, this

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phenomenon has become universal. The failure of the yellow Berne International to understand this is the result of its extreme blindness and constitutes its greatest crime. Opportunism or reformism inevitably developed into Socialist Imperialism or social patriotism, with world-historical significance. For Imperialism brought to the fore a group of very rich, highly developed countries, who plunder the whole world, and whose bourgeoisie is able, by that very fact, to buy with the surplus of its monopolist profits (for Imperialism means monopolist capitalism) the upper strata of the working class of these countries.

Only complete ignoramuses or hypocrites, who deceive the workers by repeating commonplaces on capitalism, concealing in this way the bitter truth of the passing of the whole of one Socialist tendency to the side of the Imperialist bourgeoisie, can fail to see the economic inevitability of this fact.

Two indisputable conclusions are to be drawn from this fact:—

The first conclusion is that the Berne "International" is in fact, by virtue of its actual historical and political rôle, independently of the goodwill and the innocent desires of such and such of its members, an organisation of agents of International Imperialism, acting in the midst of the working class, infusing the working class with bourgeois influence, bourgeois ideas, bourgeois lies, and bourgeois corruption.

In countries of long-standing democratic parliamentary culture the bourgeoisie has acquired the fine art of acting, not only by violence, but also by means of deceit, bribery, and flattery. The "banquets" to the British "Labour leaders" (*i.e.*, those lackeys of the bourgeoisie entrusted with the task of fooling the workers) have become notorious, and have even been mentioned by Engels. Clemenceau's "charming reception" of the Socialist-traitor Merrheim, the amicable reception of the leaders of the Berne "International" by Entente Ministers, &c., are facts of the same order. "You train them and we shall buy them," said a clever English woman capitalist to the Socialist Imperialist Hyndman, who related in his memoirs how this woman (more clear-sighted than all the leaders of the Berne "International" put together) appreciated the efforts of the Socialist intellectuals in "training" Socialist leaders who came from the working class.

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When, during the war, the Vandervelde, Brantings, and the whole band of traitors held "international" conferences, the French and British bourgeois papers remarked sarcastically, but with much justice: "These Vandervelde suffer from a kind of tic. Just as people suffering from this nervousness are incapable of uttering a phrase without being subject to a strange twitching of the muscles of the face, similarly it is impossible for Vandervelde to make a speech on politics without repeating, parrot-fashion, such words as internationalism, socialism, international solidarity of the workers, proletarian revolution, &c. Let them repeat any kind of sacred formulæ they want, so long as they help us to lead the workers by the nose and work for our, capitalist, interest in the carrying on of the Imperialist war and the enslavement of the workers."

The French and British bourgeoisie are at times extremely clever and are capable of appreciating to a nicety the servile rôle played by the Berne "International."

On a certain occasion Martoff wrote: "You Bolsheviks slander the Berne International. Yet 'your' friend Loriot is one of its members."

Now this is the argument of a scoundrel. Everyone knows that Loriot is openly, loyally, and heroically fighting for the Third International. When in 1902 Zoubatoff organised Labour meetings at Moscow for the purpose of fooling the workers with "police Socialism," a working man, by the name of Babushkin (whom I had known since 1894 as a member of the same Petrograd Labour group as myself, and who was in 1902 one of the best and most loyal members of the group known at that time under the name of "Iskra" (the Spark). He was shot in 1906 in Siberia by Rennenkampf), was a *constant frequenter of the Zoubatoff meetings*; his aim was to fight the Zoubatoff propaganda and to save as many workers as possible from its formidable clutches. Well! Babushkin was as little a follower of Zoubatoff as Loriot is an adherent of the Berne "International."

IV

The second conclusion is this. The Third (Communist) International has been established for the very purpose of preventing so-called Socialists from getting on in the world by *verbally recog-*

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nising the revolution, which is precisely what Ramsay MacDonald does in several places in his article. Verbal recognition of the revolution, a recognition which was in reality a perfect screen for petty bourgeois policy, incurably opportunist, reformist, nationalist, this was the capital offence of the Second International, and this is the evil against which we are conducting a life-and-death struggle.

When we speak of the Second International as being dead, after suffering a shameful bankruptcy, we mean to say that opportunism, reformism, petty bourgeois Socialism have become bankrupt and are dead. For the Second International has one historical merit: it has made one immortal gain, which no class-conscious worker will ever give up, viz., the establishment of mass working-class organisations (Co-operatives, Trade Unions, and political parties) as well as the utilisation of bourgeois parliamentarism, and generally all the institutions of bourgeois democracy.

To defeat opportunism, which was the cause of the ignominious death of the Second International, and to assist effectively the revolution, the approach of which is recognised even by Ramsay MacDonald, the following must be done:—

First : All propaganda and agitation must be directed towards revolution as opposed to reforms. This distinction must be systematically made clear to the masses, both theoretically and practically, in every instance of parliamentary, co-operative, trade union, and other work. There must be no refusal (except in rare special cases) to make use of parliamentarism and all the "liberties" of bourgeois democracy. Reforms must not be renounced, but should be looked upon *only as subordinate issues* in the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat. Not one of the parties of the Berne "International" satisfies these demands. Not a single one of them even evinces an understanding of how *all* propaganda and agitation must be directed towards making clear the *difference* between reforms and revolution, and of the necessity for the most strict and constant preparation, both of the Party and of the masses, for revolution.

Secondly, it is necessary to combine legal and illegal work. This was taught by the Bolsheviks at all times and particularly during the war of 1914-1918. It was ridiculed by the despicable opportunist heroes, who in their self-satisfied manner praised the

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"legality," the "democracy," and the "freedom" of the West European countries, of republics, &c. At the present time only avowed scoundrels, who deceive the workers by phrases, can deny that the Bolsheviks have been proved right. There is not a single country in the world, even the most advanced and "freest" of bourgeois republics, where there is not a reign of bourgeois terror and where agitation, propaganda, and organised work for the Socialist revolution is not prohibited. The party which up to now has been unwilling to recognise that this is so under bourgeois domination and which fails to carry on systematic *illegal* work all along the line, in spite of bourgeois laws and bourgeois parliaments, is a party of cowards and traitors who deceive the people by only recognising the revolution in words. Such parties have a place marked out for them in the yellow Berne "International." No place will be given them in the Communist International.

Thirdly, a ruthless struggle must be carried on in order to clear right out of the Labour Movement those opportunist leaders who showed their true characters before and especially during the war in politics and particularly within the Trade Unions and Co-operatives. The theory of "neutrality" is a false and mean subterfuge which helped the bourgeoisie to bulldose the masses during the war of 1914-1918. Those parties which verbally assert that they are in favour of revolution, but which do not in fact carry on a relentless struggle for the supremacy of the one genuinely revolutionary party in all working-class organisations—such a party is a party of traitors.

Fourthly, it is not enough to condemn Imperialism in words with the fixed intention not to conduct a revolutionary struggle for the liberation of the colonies (and the dependent nationalities) enslaved by their Imperialist bourgeoisie. That is hypocrisy. That is the policy of "Labour lieutenants of the capitalist class." That party—English, French, Dutch, Belgian, or any other—which is opposed in words to Imperialism, but which does not in fact carry on the revolutionary struggle within "its own" colonies for the purpose of overthrowing "its own" bourgeoisie, which does not systematically and in every possible way assist the revolutionary work which has already begun in the colonies, which does not provide the colonies with arms and literature for the work of the

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revolutionary parties—that party is a party of cowards and traitors.

Fifthly, a phenomenon typical of the parties of the Berne "International," and which is the height of hypocrisy, consists in recognising the revolution in words, and parading this recognition before the workers in pompous phrases, whilst as a matter of fact they behave in a purely reformist manner towards the first signs and manifestations of revolutionary development, such as all mass movements which by smashing bourgeois law take on an illegal character; for instance, mass strikes, street demonstrations, soldiers' mutinies, meetings among the troops, the distribution of leaflets in barracks and camps, &c.

Ask any one you like of the heroes of the Berne "International" whether his party is conducting this kind of systematic revolutionary work. He will answer either by evasive phrases, seeking to hide the absence of such work, and making obvious the defects of organisation and the lack of machinery for such work, the inability of his Party to carry on such work, or he will declaim against tolerating "Putschism," "anarchy," &c. It is just this which constitutes the treason of the Berne "International" to the working class; just here is its actual transition into the camp of the bourgeoisie.

All these rogues who call themselves leaders of the Berne "International" are overflowing with assurances of sympathy for revolution in general and for the Russian revolution in particular. But only hypocrites and fools will fail to understand that the exceedingly rapid progress of the revolution in Russia is in direct *relation* with the work carried on for many years by the revolutionary party precisely in the direction mentioned above; whilst during whole years a systematic illegal apparatus was being created for leading demonstrations and strikes, for carrying on work amongst the troops; whilst the Party studied in detail the methods of the struggle, and created a literature summarising its experiences and bringing up all its members to regard the revolution as necessary; whilst finally it prepared leaders of the masses who were ready to act when the time came, &c.

V

The most profound and deep-rooted differences, which sum up all that has been said above, and which explain the inevitable

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character of the relentless struggle—both in theory and in practical politics—of the revolutionary proletariat with the Berne "International," are aroused by the two questions of the transition of the Imperialist war into civil war and of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The enslavement of the Berne "International" to bourgeois ideology is revealed nowhere better than in the fact that not having understood (or having no wish to understand, or pretending not to understand) the Imperialist character of the war of 1914-1918, it has not grasped the inevitability of that war turning into a civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie of all the highly developed countries.

When, as early as November, 1914, the Bolsheviks pointed out that this was inevitable the philistines of every country retorted with senseless scoffs, and among these philistines were found all the leaders of the Berne "International." To-day the transformation of the Imperialist war into civil war has become a fact in a number of countries (not only in Russia, but also in Finland, in Hungary, in Germany, and even in neutral Switzerland), whilst the development of civil war is to be observed and is palpably evident in all the leading countries without exception.

To pass this question over in silence at the present time (as Ramsay MacDonald does) or to evade it by means of mealy-mouthed conciliatory phrases (as do Messrs. Kautsky & Co.) amounts to a direct betrayal of the proletariat, to an actual going over to the side of the bourgeoisie. For the present leaders of the bourgeoisie have long ago understood the inevitability of civil war; they are making preparations for this war, and are strengthening their position admirably, carefully according to plan. With all its strength, with incomparable energy, intelligence, and boldness, hesitating at no crime and condemning whole countries to starvation and extermination *en masse*, the bourgeoisie of the whole world is getting ready to crush the proletariat in the civil war which is approaching. Yet the heroes of the Berne "International," fools, hypocrites, and pedants that they are, repeat *ad nauseam* their old, antiquated reformist story! No spectacle could be more disgusting, more repulsive.

The Kautskys and the MacDonalds threaten the capitalists with

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revolution, they intimidate the bourgeoisie by means of civil war in order to obtain concessions from them, on reformist lines. This is what all the writings, all the philosophy and all the politics of the Berne " International " amount to, in sum.

We observed these despicably servile methods in the year 1905 in Russia on the part of the liberals (Cadets), as well as in 1917-1919 on the part of the Mensheviks and " Socialist Revolutionaries." The slavish minds of the Berne " International " never dream of *educating* the masses to a sense of the inevitable necessity of *defeating* the bourgeoisie in the civil war, nor of directing all policy towards this end, of stating, elucidating, and deciding all questions from this point of view, and from this point of view only. It is because of this that our sole aim should be to relegate once and for all these impenitent reformists (*i.e.*, nine-tenths of the leaders of the Berne " International) to the rubbish heap of the hangers-on of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie needs hangers-on of this kind, to whom it can confide a section of the working class and who in speeches on the possibility of reformism can whitewash the bourgeoisie, thus throwing dust in the eyes of the people and turning them aside from revolution by drawing beautiful pictures of the possibilities and the delights of the reformist method.

All the writings of Kautsky as well of our own Mensheviks and " Socialist Revolutionaries " amount to such a picture, to the snivelling whine of the cowardly, comfortable, middle-class citizen, who is afraid of revolution.

It is not possible here to repeat in detail the basic economic causes which have made any other but a revolutionary road impossible, which have made the solution of the questions set before us by history impossible save by civil war. This is a topic to write about, and one upon which volumes will be written. If the Kautskys and other leaders of the Berne " International " have not understood this one can only remind them that ignorance is less removed from truth than prejudice.

For the workers, ignorant but sincere, and the adherents of the working masses understand more easily to-day, after the war, the inevitability of revolution, of civil war, and of proletarian dictatorship than do Messieurs Kautsky, MacDonald, Vandervelde,

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Branting, Turati, *et hoc genus omne*, crammed as they are with over-learned reformist prejudices.

One of the particularly graphic proofs of the growth of revolutionary consciousness among the masses, which is to be observed everywhere, may be found in the novels of Henri Barbusse: *Le Feu* and *Clarté*. The first of these has already been translated into all languages and, in France, had a sale of 230,000 copies. The conversion of a totally ignorant man, smothered in the vulgar ideas and prejudices of the masses, into a revolutionary, simply under the influence of war, is portrayed with unusual force, talent, and truthfulness.

The mass of the proletarians and semi-proletarians are with us and are coming over to our side not only every day, but almost every hour. The Berne "International" is like a General Staff without an army, which will collapse like a house of cards if only it is completely exposed in the eyes of the masses.

Throughout the whole of the Entente bourgeois Press the name of Karl Liebknecht was used during the war to deceive the masses, in order to represent the French and English Imperialist bandits and looters as sympathising with this hero, "the only honest German" as they used to call him.

To-day the heroes of the Berne "International" sit in the same organisation with the Scheidemanns who instigated the murder of Karl Liebknecht and of Rosa Luxembourg; the Scheidemanns who have been playing the rôle of executioners of the working class, who have done hangman service to the bourgeoisie. As far as words are concerned they make a hypocritical attempt to "condemn" Scheidemann (as if this "condemnation" could alter things in any way). In reality they remain in the same organisation as these murderers.

In 1907 the late Harry Quelch was expelled from Stuttgart by the German Government for having called a meeting of European diplomats a "thieves' kitchen." The leaders of the Berne "International" are not only a conference of thieves, they are a conference of foul murderers.

They will not in the end escape the judgment of the revolutionary workers!

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VI

Ramsay MacDonald treats the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat in a supercilious manner, just as if it were a subject entering into a discussion on liberty and democracy.

Enough! It is time to act! Discussions are now out of place!

The greatest menace of the Berne "International" lies in its verbal recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. These people are ready to recognise and endorse anything so long as they remain at the head of the Labour Movement. Kautsky now declares that he is not opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The French social-patriots and "Centrists" have also endorsed a resolution in favour of proletarian dictatorship.

These people do not deserve the least confidence.

What we want is not verbal recognition, but a complete rupture *in fact* with the policy of reformism, with the prejudices of bourgeois liberty and bourgeois democracy, and the actual application of the policy of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat. Attempts are being made to recognise in words the dictatorship of the proletariat, with a view later on to introduce furtively the "will of the majority," "universal suffrage" (as Kautsky notably does), bourgeois parliamentarism, renunciation of the complete destruction, extirpation, and demolition of the whole bourgeois State machinery. These new subterfuges and evasions are most of all to be feared.

The dictatorship of the proletariat would be impossible did the majority of the population not consist of proletarians and semi-proletarians. Kautsky & Co. are endeavouring to falsify this so as to make a "majority vote" necessary, in order that the dictatorship of the proletariat may be "regularised."

The ludicrous pedants! They have not yet understood that the franchise, within the limits of the institutions and according to the usages of bourgeois parliamentarism, is *part* of the bourgeois State machinery, which must be smashed and destroyed from top to bottom in order that the dictatorship of the proletariat may be realised as the transition stage from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy.

They do not understand that when history places the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat before us, the question is

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decided not by voting but by civil war, as, generally speaking, *all* serious political questions have been decided.

They do not understand that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the power of *one* class taking the whole of the new State machinery into its hands, overthrowing the bourgeoisie and neutralising the whole of the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry, and the vague masses of the general population and the intellectuals.

The Kautskys and the MacDonalds acknowledge the class struggle in words, but in actual fact they forget about it at the most decisive moment in the history of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat: at the moment when, having seized State power and being supported by the semi-proletariat, the proletariat by means of this power *continues* the class struggle, to carry it on right up to the complete *abolition of classes*.

Like true philistines, the leaders of the Berne "International" repeat bourgeois-democratic catch phrases on liberty, equality, and democracy, without perceiving that what they repeat is just the debris of the idea of free and equal *ownership of commodities;* not understanding that the proletariat needs State power not for "liberty," but in order to *crush* its enemy, the exploiter, the capitalist.

The idea of the liberty and equality of the owners of commodities is as dead as capitalism itself. It is not given to the Kautskys and the MacDonalds to resuscitate it.

What the proletariat needs is the abolition of classes; this is the essence of proletarian democracy, of proletarian liberty (freedom from capitalism, from the exchange of commodities), of proletarian equality (not the equality of *classes*—a commonplace over which the Kautskys, Vanderveldes, and MacDonalds all go astray—but the equality of the workers who *overthrow* capital and capitalism).

So long as classes exist, the liberty and equality of classes is a bourgeois deceit. The proletariat seizes power, becomes the *dominant* class, destroys bourgeois parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy, suppresses the bourgeoisie, suppresses *all* the attempts of *all* the other classes to return to capitalism, and gives *real* liberty and equality to the *workers* (which is realisable only by the *abolition* of private property in the means of production), gives them not

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only the " right " to enjoy, but also *real* enjoyment of that which has been wrested from the bourgeoisie.

He who has failed to understand that this is the essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat (or what is one and the same thing, of the Soviet Government, of proletarian democracy) will have read this article to no purpose, and will continue to use the word liberty in the sense of liberty in general, of bourgeois democracy.

It is not possible here for me to develop this theme in more detail. I have already fully dealt with it in my brochures, *The State and Revolution* and *The Proletarian Revolution and Kautsky the Renegade.* I can finish now by dedicating this article to the delegates of the Lucerne Congress of the Berne " International."

July, 1919.

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LENIN

By M. PHILIPS PRICE

"Im Anfang war die That."—GOETHE'S *Faust*, Part I

IN the panorama of the Russian Revolution one peak towers above all others and that is the personality of Lenin. Writers in the capitalist Press of all Europe and America recognise this fact. But how do they interpret Lenin? They write of him as of the master brain who, by a combination of genius and ruthlessness brought about the great change in Russia. Die-hards on Russia, like *The Times*, in their frantic endeavours to obstruct recognition, have for months been arguing as if the whole fate of the Soviet government hung on the life of Lenin and that because of his death the whole Soviet regime will collapse like a pack of cards. That may be the extreme type of this kind of journalism, but even the more moderate writers, who have no axes to grind, assume that the Russian Revolution was largely the work of somebody.

Men and women can, I think, be divided as regards their attitude on such subjects into two categories. There are those who trace great social and political events to personalities and those who trace them to the working of the laws of matter and energy in human affairs. One school of philosophy regards change as due to some agency acting independently of the flow of cause and effect. As the inspirer of liberal individualism, Kant idolised the personality. He held that natural phenomena were only what the individual made them. The elements of nature, independent of Man's interpretation of them, or the *Ding an sich*, did not exist for him. And we find this train of reasoning on modern economic and social problems widespread even to-day. Bourgeois ideology is saturated with it. Pacifist and even Socialist thought is affected by it. The Kaiser caused the war, say some, Poincaré and the Tsar, say others. Clemenceau caused the chaos of the peace by the Versailles Treaty. In the same line of thought it follows that Lenin made the Russian Revolution.

Then there is the other outlook. It is expressed in general terms in the words of Hegel: "Everything exists; yet it does not

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exist, for it is always in a state of creation and disruption." And again, as Hart puts it : "Chance has no more part in psychology than it has in physics. Every thought that flits through the mind, however casual or irrelevant it may seem to be, is the only thought which can possibly result from the various mental processes which preceded it." And these mental processes are determined, say these, by the material conditions under which men and women get their living and which are always changing in an inevitable direction. This does not mean that all human effort is vain or that the march of economic progress emancipates men from the necessity of struggle. This view of life postulates that material conditions include not merely instruments and tools of production but the knowledge of how to use them and the ideas which arise from the experience of their use.

With a knowledge of these two mental outlooks the characters of men are more easily explicable. One man with the Kantian outlook may acquire the highest knowledge, let us say, in one branch of science, but his brain is divided into water-tight compartments and in another sphere of life he may be a fervent Catholic or an ardent patriot and believer in the stability of the present order of society. Such types of men became prominent in the public eye during the war. They were the brilliant men who had explored all avenues in one part of the hall of Wisdom, but who became little men and flag-waving babblers in times when the roof of the hall was falling in. On the other hand the man, who has sufficient nerve and physical strength to take the initiative in urging his fellow-men forward, but who adapts his thought and actions to his environment, is really a great man. Such types of men only appear in public life in times when the stream of social progress is flowing rapidly. He is the rational man, who, as the writer in the Plebs text book of Psychology puts it (p. 83), "fearlessly drags into the light all mental elements contributing to his opinions ; whose associations are strong enough, numerous enough, and sufficiently organised in systems to reinforce these tendencies which harmonise with the reality principle . . and to inhibit those which appeal to the pleasure principles, *i.e.*, to the gratification of instincts without regard to the consequences by which that gratification is followed in the world of reality." This type of man was personified in Lenin.

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It can be observed in Nature that when glaciers and ice sheets are in retreat they leave behind them debris and chains of lakes. On the debris arctic flora soon appear, into the lakes fishes soon find their way. How they get there is often a mystery, but once the environment, created by the action of the ice, is prepared, the plant and animal life are there. So with human affairs, which are only a part of Nature. When the equilibrium of the class balance is disturbed by the decay of one class and the rise of another, individuals will appear describing to their fellow men what is happening, pointing the moral and showing the way by which the new equilibrium can be attained. First comes the act of transition, spontaneously provoked in society by its own internal process. Then comes the word of the teacher and leader to make further progress easier. It is not correct to think with the first chapter of St. John that "In the beginning was the Word." The truth can be found in the words which Goethe puts into the mouth of Faust: "*Im Anfang war die That*"—"In the beginning was the Deed."

Those who accept the determinist outlook will challenge the whole conception of human history as understood by the liberal and metaphysical school. They will, for instance, not attribute the spread of Christianity to the words spoken by Christ, but to the actions and counteractions of social forces within the Roman Empire at that time, to the conflict between a declining ruling class and the exploited communities of the Roman colonies, creating on its economic sub-soil a spiritual groundwork fit to receive the words spoken by Christ. They will not attribute the Reformation in England to the whims of Henry VIII, but to conditions which made it possible for ships to sail from London to Flanders laden with wool from the English sheep ranches. They will see in the Napoleonic wars not Bonaparte's lust of conquest but the conflict between the remnants of feudalism in Central Europe and the rising bourgeoisie of France. They will be less inclined to wax enthusiastic over the personalities of Garibaldi and Mazzini and will see in the Italian wars of independence the struggle between the West European industrial and trading capital with the decaying feudalism of the Eastern Roman Empire. They will see in the cause of the American civil war not the Northerner's hatred of slavery,

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voiced by Abraham Lincoln, but the desire to break the Southern landlords' monopoly of the labour market and to make the slaves "free" to work in the sweating dens of what subsequently became the American Steel Corporation. And lastly they will see in Lenin, not the man who set up the Soviet Republic of Russia, but the man who told the Russian workers and peasants what they were unconsciously doing in 1917 and what further steps they would be driven by the iron law of the class struggle to take.

The first time I ever set eyes on Lenin was at the first All-Russia Conference of Peasants' delegates in the Narodny Dom at Petrograd in May, 1917. It was about eight weeks after the food riots in the capital had caused the Cossacks to join the workers and had demonstrated the incapacity of a government monopolised by an agrarian nobility to run a State engaged in a modern war. In the beginning was the deed which caused Tsarism to fall, purely destructive and negative in its effect, unless followed by another. Following the deed must, therefore, come the clarifying word. The peasant delegates had gathered from all parts of Russia to decide upon their attitude towards the provisional government and the Petrograd Soviet. They had been summoned by the Socialist Revolutionary Party, which nine-tenths of them looked upon as their party by tradition. I heard the Socialist Revolutionary leaders expound an agrarian programme—expropriation of landlords, "the land for the people," "liberty" for the peasants, and other vague phrases. The great assembly of bearded peasants and callow youths from distant villages of the great plain listened and applauded. They saw in these thoughts the next step towards fulfilling the task which they had begun eight weeks before. On the third day of the conference I arrived late and found a short, thick-set man with a bald head speaking and was told that it was Lenin. I knew nothing about him except that I had heard from Cadets and from the foreign colony in Petrograd that he was a dangerous German spy who ought to be arrested. My own mind was at that time a mixture of anti-militarist pacifism and Fabian collectivism with remnants of my Manchester Free Trade family tradition still floating about. I listened to Lenin and the only part of his speech which stuck in my memory was that in which he strongly attacked the view that peasants, as such, were a class, or

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that they could solve the agrarian problem without the help of the town population. Were there not also classes in the villages, he said, having conflicting interests with one another? Are there not classes in the towns which can find allies in the villages? Lenin was weakly applauded and was followed by a Socialist Revolutionary speaker who strongly attacked his whole position. I left mystified. Were the Russian peasants a class to themselves; was an alliance between town and village possible? I was wondering. The peasant congress decided for the Socialist Revolutionary view, that the peasants could solve the agrarian problems themselves. The Socialist Revolutionaries' word had been taken to crown the deed of February 27, 1917. Lenin's word had been spoken, but the time was not yet ripe for it to bear fruit. He was at best a dreamer, an agitator, a crank, wrote the ink-coolies of Petrograd after the congress, at worst an agent of the Kaiser.

Four months later I was staying in a distant village in the Samara province. I was squatting on the ground one Sunday afternoon with a crowd of peasants round the common barn and was watching a meeting of the "selsky skhod" or village Soviet. It had been summoned to consider how to divide the latifundias of the lord of the manor, who had just fled to the Crimea. The first stage of the agrarian revolution had already been carried through in this district. The peasants were supreme. What was to happen now? By the close of the meeting it was clear that the Soviet could come to no unanimous decision. Some wanted division of land according to the number of horses possessed by a peasant family, some according to the number of "souls" (persons) in a family. The village was beginning to split up into those who had been successful wartime speculators and those who had been unfortunate and had been left in the lurch. Then I remembered Lenin's speech at the peasants' congress and pondered over his words. Would a new deed follow upon his word?

Six months later I was travelling in a train crowded with "sack-carriers" and workmen from the towns, seeking food in the villages. In several rural stations which we passed "committees of the poorer peasants" had been formed to control the requisition of food in the village, regulate the land distribution in the interests of poorer peasants and the trade between town and country. The

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workmen of the towns had acted, were forcing their way on to the land, and were finding an ally in the poorer peasantry. The second phase of the agrarian revolution had begun. The Socialist Revolutionaries' dream was fading. The class struggle was penetrating the village. The masses had acted as Lenin had said they would act. In the beginning was the deed. Who was to speak the word in explanation to prepare for the next step ?

Soon after I attended a meeting of the Moscow Trades Council and Soviet. Lenin, now president of the Commissars' council, was the principal speaker. His thesis was " the next problem before the Soviet power." We all listened spell-bound, not to his oratory, for he had none, but to his astonishingly lucid exposition in simple everyday Russian of what was in his opinion the next practical step for the people to take. I saw the eyes of peasants sparkle, and smiles of joy creep over the faces of workmen, as Lenin said something which they had evidently been unconsciously thinking for weeks past. The alliance between the workers of town and village was the only solid basis for the Revolution, he said. Only those key industries must be nationalised which the town workers could run and work, so as to provide cheap goods for the peasants in return for which the towns would get food. If in the process the town workers must leave some subsidiary branches of industry to private enterprise for a time and call to their aid experts trained in the ideology of capitalism to teach them how to trade and keep accounts, they must not be afraid to say so and act accordingly.

But there were differences of opinion in the Russian Communist Party on Lenin's thesis. Some thought it too opportunist and began to predict an early victory for the counter-revolution if the experts of capitalism were recalled to assist in reorganisation of proletarian-controlled key industries. The wars of the intervention, however, came and complicated the issues. Foreign finance capital by its attack on the Russian Republic stabilised for a time " military communism " and artificially enlarged the scope of the nationalised industries to include general rationing of the products even of small crafts and village husbandries. But when the war was over, the military necessity was gone. The villages began to chafe under military communism. Doctrinaires in the Russian Communist Party would not see that a dangerous

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psychical moment was approaching and were dreaming of stabilising military communism in peace time. It required a big man to tell his party comrades that they would drive the Revolution to destruction if they persisted. And as a matter of fact it was not Lenin who made the economic policy, but the Kronstadt revolt and other actions of the masses which enabled him to persuade his colleagues of the necessity of a tactical retreat. The New Economic Policy was only the fulfilment of Lenin's thesis on "the next problem before the Soviet power" which I had heard him expound in Moscow three years before. Lenin had correctly interpreted the feeling in the villages. He saw that the town workers must for the present be content with the nationalisation of the key industries only and must leave the trade in commodities free to private enterprise and to the peasant co-operative societies. But in order that this should be plain to all the Kronstadt revolt was necessary. Once more in the beginning of this new phase in the Russian Revolution was the deed. "*Im Anfang war die That.*" Lenin's words had correctly interpreted the significance of that deed.

I have refrained from describing personal interviews which I had with Lenin during the Revolution, because I think they are less interesting than his writing and public utterances, many of which have never been published and can only be found in the contemporary Russian literature of the early phases of the Revolution. They show that Lenin's greatness was not only personal charm and simple manner, but his almost uncanny capacity to forecast events and to see the obvious step to take in a chaotic situation. His whole public life was a living example of the truth of the Marxian, determinist outlook on history and politics. He watched for the actions of the masses, spontaneous and springing from below, those symbols of the underground class struggle in the declining period of capitalism. And when they appeared, he explained them and showed what thought must come into the minds of men in order that those actions should bring the fruits of reality. And he hammered at the public till those thoughts were absorbed and its mind prepared for the next action, which it, not Lenin, would inevitably make. He was the guide, philosopher, and friend to all working-class movements throughout the world, but he did not, he could not, make them.

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" Like as the waves upon the pebbled shore, so do our minutes hasten to their end." The grave under the Kremlin walls shows that one wave, greater than the rest, has spent its force. But others will follow. And those who come after Lenin will also profit by the accumulated store of his vast natural wisdom and will continue to strengthen the alliance between the workers of towns and villages both in the Russian Republic and elsewhere in the world. And the secret of their strength will be, as was the strength of Lenin, that they strive in Swinburne's words:—

" To be men with their might,
To grow straight in the strength of their spirit
And live out their lives as the light."

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TOWARDS A NEW POLICY.—III

By WILL LAWTHER

(Of the Durham Miners' Association and the Labour Party National Executive)

(The first article, "Towards a New Policy," was written by W. H. Hutchinson, of the Engineers and Labour Party Executive, in the January number of THE LABOUR MONTHLY; *the second by George Hicks, of the Builders and the Trades Union Congress General Council, appeared in the February issue. The fourth article will be by Robert Williams, of the Transport Workers and the Labour Party Executive, and will be published next month.*

EVERY few years (and in some industries the periods are shorter), new movements spring up, manifestos are scattered broadcast, all urging the same object, in varying degrees, as others that have appeared before them, of the quickest steps to be taken in the securing of some concession that is necessary for a particular section of organised industrial workers. Whether the concession sought be wages, hours, or some other improvement in the conditions of the industry concerned, "Forward" movements, "Next Steps" and so forth have set the pace. None of them have failed, they have in each and every instance been landmarks demonstrating what the pioneer could do. And at that particular moment, when a new departure has been made, of a break with and a change from the old policy, the "new" has been hailed as the supreme discovery.

And yet after the new movement has had its vogue, something further has been discovered, and that is that no progress has been made.

The failure to go ahead one step further has oftimes, except when the concession has been a reduction of hours, meant that no tangible gain has been made. That theory is found to be correct in the light of the facts (as revealed by the various books issued by the Labour Research Department) in all the key industries, which

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give positive proof of the " hold " on industry, the profits made, and the magnitude of the task that lies before any movement that seeks a change, either industrial or political.

Following the good example set by the previous contributors to this series, no good purpose will be served by dealing at any length with the failings of the past. " Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

To-day we have to face the facts as never before, and it is generally agreed that no single industrial organisation can defeat the powers that it is organised against. In nearly every industry within recent years, stirring fights have taken place, heroic struggles have been carried through, and the end has been, that terms have been accepted that in the main fell far short of the original demands. " The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak."

Success, therefore, for any industrial organisation, is conditional on a more perfected and efficient machine, functioning as never before. And the term functioning means something more than merely the laying down of tools and the folding of arms.

For example, to-day the Miners' Federation is within a few weeks of ending their present wages agreement. Apart from proposals that were made to the coalowners last year, the bulk of the members of the M.F.G.B. have no knowledge of what are likely to be the new demands, whether a new " pool " is to be found or formed, or what. Whatever the failings of the present agreement in the mining industry may be, those who have worked under it for starvation wages ought to have been consulted as to the new agreement.

There is a feeling amongst the miners that, having regard to the available returns of the production of coal since 1919, the six-hour day as promised in the Sankey award ought to be conceded with any new wages agreement. This would likewise fall under the heading of " possible " concessions. The same applies to the abolition of royalty-rents and way-leaves, to which a majority of the present House of Commons (*i.e.*, Labour and Liberal and even some Tories) are agreed. There is undoubtedly a strong feeling that these demands should be taken up. But will they ?

Here in this immediate instance is an example of that failure to have actual touch and contact with the membership, which is

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a possible source of the apathy that eats its way into the heart of organisations.

There is a tendency too that might as well be faced at once, because of the harm that may be done to both the industrial and political sides of the movement. We refer to that feeling that because a Labour Government is in office, industrial demands should be dropped. Whosoever will may cherish that ideal, but "reality" will teach them the contrary. While no one is going either to deny the tremendous problem that lies ahead of the Labour Party or to indulge in the day-dreams that one prominent Labour propagandist did, *i.e.*, "that the workers should receive the whole of their losses in wages during the last two years back again," on the other hand there can be no question that those who have both worked and voted for Labour in industrial centres do cherish the hope that something more tangible than sympathy will be shown in industrial struggles, or in attempts to improve their industrial status.

Of the stating of the problems there can be no end. Where and along what lines lie the possible solution.

One remembers vividly, the enthusiast who jumps up at active trade-union branch meetings, and, at district conferences of organisations, when confronted with the solving of some problem, moves: "That this meeting calls upon the Trades Union Congress to do this, that, or the other, &c., &c."; and believes that if only his resolution were carried and acted upon, then the end of our difficulties would have been reached. The experience of the last few years have shattered his illusion, and to-day the needs of the hour have decreed that not exactly elsewhere, but with some other source or sources, combined and not yet tapped, must the solution be found. Briefly we indicate where some of the remedies may be found pending the hammering out of the points that are raised here, and have been indicated previously.

(1) There is a need for a thorough overhauling of the local machinery in industrial organisation. It ought to be impossible either now, or in the future for any section of workers to be under any misapprehension as to the grievances that any section of workers are suffering from, or fighting against. And the only possible machinery to do that work effectively are the Trades Councils. The

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argument that the local Labour Parties supply that need will hardly be taken seriously by those who take an active part in their work, or know their constitution. Moreover, the work of the local Labour Parties in the main is directed to the question of the organisation of municipal and parliamentary affairs. It is not a difficult matter to have a combination, but both sides desire attention. Indications have been given of the need and possibility of linking up with the Trades Union Congress, similar to the method of local Labour Parties.

(2) No industry should be without its newsheet, wherein full facilities could be given for the discussion and ventilation of those subjects that affect the man or woman in their industrial life. Several organisations have accomplished this, yet the largest, the Miners, have no journal of their own. It is to be hoped that the new journal, the *Mineworker*, will develop sufficiently to meet this need. Even from an official point of view, steps along these lines would go a long way towards removing many of the misunderstandings that exist to-day, and would, as a matter of fact, have a political reflex, as facts in relation to the particular industry given at conferences to a selected few would be read by all.

(3) We have already elsewhere dealt with the need for an overhauling of the machinery of the Trades Union Congress, and the functions of the General Council generally ; the only criticism that has been made thereon (and by a rank-and-filer, too !) is (*a*) that the members would not give power to deal with all matters affecting industrial workers (maybe because it would never be used !) and (*b*) that the membership are not interested in any change !

(4) We have refrained from dealing in a general sense, apart from the industry we are connected with, with that high-sounding theme, " What the workers want ! " There must have been thousands of leaflets, pamphlets, and books, issued on that topic. Some from the players in the field, and some from the spectators.

The immediate demands are fairly well-known. Each industry has in the past tabled its own idea of its requirements without consulting the members of other organisations. If one has succeeded, then the others have followed, if failure has been the lot of the pioneer, then the owners of capital have seen that the others, too, followed their fellows trade-unionists on the downward path.

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What is wanted is a common programme. It does not matter so much what is demanded so long as it is a common programme.

(5) The immediate and urgent requirement is for the initial steps to be taken in the summoning of those who in every industry feel that to-day is the day of salvation, for the free, full, and frank discussion of the problems here only briefly dealt with. To accomplish this ought not to be a superhuman task. Sooner or later it has to be done.

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LABOUR TASTES POWER

By R. PAGE ARNOT

THE Labour Government did not come as a shock to anyone except the mob of titled ladies and Stock Exchange speculators and their hangers-on.

Over a year ago the certainty of a Labour Government, the conditions under which it would take office, the sort of legislation it would be able to put through, everything in fact except the actual date of its advent, were pretty accurately known and prepared for. Writing eight months ago in the June issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY,[1] I found it possible—as many others found it possible—to deal with the approach of the Labour Party to power as an actual process soon to be completed. It was possible then to make several prophecies and to predict the sort of situation that has now arisen, such as the Labour Government entering into office with a three-Party system in the House of Commons, a government without a clear majority and, therefore, depending on Liberal votes, fettered to such measures as the Liberal Party would be willing to approve.

To gauge what is going to happen in general terms, in abstract terms of political development, does not mean, however accurate, that the business of the observer is simply to say, " I told you so." No one but a political fool would fall back on " I told you so." Even where events most accurately fit in with predictions all sorts of unexpected features are revealed, and the event with all its attendant features must be studied afresh without any thought of whether it was expected or unexpected.

The Labour Party is now in office. What does this mean ? Does it really mean nothing more than a parliamentary change over and a government existing on sufferance ? No, it means something much more. Firstly, it means that a definite feeling of despair and deadlock has been reached amongst the old governing classes, a deadlock which at any rate affects the economic system of British capitalism.

[1] Volume IV., No. 6, pp. 329-339

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Secondly, it means the decomposition of the petty bourgeoisie as an element permanently attached to one or other of the old Parties, as they have been in the last sixty years. It means a re-forming and regrouping of the petty bourgeoisie around a Party which they feel will in some way represent their interests, have regard for their grievances and voice their sentiments as neither the Tories nor the Liberals have effectively done since the epoch of Gladstone.

Thirdly, and most important, it means the awakening of the working class and the beginning of the end of capitalist politics in Great Britain.

But it does not mean, on the other hand, the decomposition or enfeeblement of the bourgeoisie. They are in a difficulty, it is true, but they are by no means finished. Nor does it mean that the small shopkeepers, small traders, workers on their own, farmers, small professional men and so forth have all swung over to follow the lead of the working class; on the contrary, any swing over that shows itself will be in the direction of the working class accepting the outlook and limiting their aims to the policy of the petty bourgeoisie. Lastly, it does not mean that the working class have finally forsaken capitalist politics ; there still remains the danger of a re-action to a belief in either the Liberals or the Tories. That danger, which cannot be taken lightly, will become more remote, exactly according to the extent that the working class feel, in their everyday lives, that this Labour Government makes a real difference to them. If they do not feel that, then the danger will come nearer.

But apart from any detailed examination of the meaning of the change, it is obvious to everyone that this first Labour Government, if for no other reason than that it is the first, is of tremendous significance. It means a great deal in itself. On its actions there depends even more ; particularly its initial actions. Its first steps, its first session, are of incalculable importance compared to any of its subsequent developments once its course is fairly set.

What is that course to be ? Is there any parallel to these people, born out of the purple, suddenly becoming heirs to all the generations of parliamentary government, assuming burdens that had been borne before them by Palmerston, Pitt and Chatham,

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by Bolingbroke and Walpole, even by Lord Bacon and the blessed Thomas More, taking on them duties that in the dimmer past had been Wolsey's and Becket's, now as then swearing allegiance to the King Anointed, encompassed about in all their doings by venerated traditions and habits that were old when John of Gaunt was young? There is nothing like it. There have been Labour Governments before, in a new country like Australia, in Germany after the Kaiser was dethroned. But there is no parallel or precedent to this. New to office, these men are entering on an experience where all the surroundings and all the conditions are set beforehand and in which their reaction to these conditions, their behaviour in each new circumstance is being watched with the expectancy both of alarm and hope, both amongst the ordinary middle-class people and business men who cannot entirely rid themselves of a little dread (though they will master their fears and assume that nothing extraordinary has happened), and by their own supporters who think of them as the beginning of a new epoch, an end to the past. Amongst the workers the advent and the new acts of the Labour Government are awaited, not with the same hushed expectancy that greeted Woodrow Wilson when he came to Europe five and a half years ago—men can no longer hope as they did then—but with general goodwill and reasonable expectation.

How exactly have the bourgeoisie, the governing class circles themselves, behaved towards the new men? It might have been thought that they would do everything to harass and menace them.

In the past many Socialist writers expected that the coming of a Labour Government would be accompanied by the resignations of admirals and other highly placed officials of the war services, by trouble and deadlock in the House of Lords, by refusals of the ordinary short-term loans (through which the day-to-day obligations of a government are met) on the part of the bankers, by sabotage of officials and by a terrific concerted campaign in the Press. No such thing. There was no immediate general onslaught. It is true that here and there, in spite of the general policy of the bourgeoisie expressed in the phrase "Give the new men a chance," there were interests, sections and persons, such as the Scottish

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Faculty of Advocates, or if what Mr. Maxton avers is true, admirals of the Navy, who were unable to see that a policy of obstruction would do the Labour Government more good than harm, or who, seeing this, were yet not prepared to subordinate their minor interests to the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole. That general bourgeois policy was to present the velvet glove, to make strong representations in the Press, in speeches and privately, but to do nothing overt that could be construed as wilful obstruction and sabotage.

More important than any specific question has been the creation of the right atmosphere, an atmosphere in which the appearance of goodwill and fair play on the side of the old Parties is to be reciprocated by an acceptance of the ordinary conventions of constitutional government on the other. It is expected of the new Ministers that they should, " in matters unconnected with Party," behave exactly as other Ministers of the Crown have done, that is, attend banquets, levées, receptions, dinners to distinguished personages, &c., &c. If necessary, some of these conventions may even be modified to meet any objection raised by the new Ministers. Thus, if the wearing of the customary gorgeous Court dress makes some of the Ministers feel that they would answer so to John Milton's description of attendants on Kings as " grooms besmeared with gold" then that objection will be listened to and met ; the gold will be taken off the costume—and both the style and the price of Court dress made more modest. In short, no difference is to be made in the public treatment of the Labour men. Photographs are taken of them, anecdotes are told of them in the Press, their personal character and past history are good-naturedly commented upon. When the composition of the new Cabinet was declared and it was discovered that it was, what in the Labour Movement would be termed—with the exception of John Wheatley —extreme Right Wing, the congratulations showered on Mr. MacDonald for his choice were unfeignedly sincere. When the one Left Wing member of the Cabinet, John Wheatley, as Minister of Health rescinds the Poor Law Order that surcharged the Poplar Guardians, the first outcry, the way in which they showed their teeth, was the outcome of a genuine alarm at the possibility of a spread of the Poplar spirit rather than the beginning of any

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concerted break in the harmonious attitude that had hitherto prevailed.

Of course, the bourgeoisie were not going to leave it entirely to persuasion and the creation of a generous atmosphere. The six weeks' delay in the resignation of the Conservative Cabinet had undoubtedly, amongst other causes, the reason that the Budget estimates for the new financial year would have been practically settled in advance, and made secure—except for minor alterations—against any sweeping changes.

Can the attitude of the Labour Movement and of the workers as a whole be described in the same detail? How exactly, can we ask, did they feel about it? The Left Wing, it is true, found it hard to stomach the inclusion of the Conservative Lord Chelmsford in the Cabinet, and even looked askance at experienced lawyers like Lords Haldane and Parmoor. But most of the leaders showed themselves wildly enthusiastic. In some cases, like Lansbury, they felt almost like counselling the workers to refrain from demanding wages increases or immediate bettering of industrial conditions so that nothing whatever might hinder the launching of the new government. It was felt that everything must be made propitious for the Labour Government, even if it meant some sacrifice in order that they might have a good start and a calm sea. The murmurs that were heard at Cabinet making time were mainly amongst those who were "in the know"; the workers themselves remained tolerant and undisturbed. They acclaimed the recognition of Russia without questioning its curious form, or being in any way agitated by the suggestion of delay; Neil Maclean and Duncan Carmichael, they felt, had shown themselves over-fearful. The news of the death of Lenin came in the week that the new Labour Government was formed; they mourned Lenin without noting anything about MacDonald's ready letter to the wife of Woodrow Wilson, and the absence of any similar letter to the wife of Lenin. In fact, the workers were not merely tolerant; they were anxious not to notice anything wrong; and not even the exclusion of Lansbury and Smillie from the Cabinet made any difference to this attitude.

Thus everything conspires to give the Labour Government a good entrance: and if it were merely a question of playing

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through a part, carrying out the rôle of Ministers and Secretaries of State, "Leading the House," piloting bills through Committee and doing everything correctly as their predecessors had done, then there would be no difficulty. Labour's taste of power would give it both appetite and capacity for more.

But this is not the whole story.

Outside all this, untouchable by it, there are the terrific questions of the collapse of capitalist civilisation, the unhalting disintegration of country after country, the crushing lower and lower of the working class, the menace to all Europe of the millions of workless starving men in Germany, the permanent unemployment of over a million workers in Britain, the struggle of the peasants and workers in India. To all these things, to all these men and women, the Labour Government, installed (by leave) where Pym and Hampden stood, is but as a tale that is told. To all these souls the Labour Government, its parliamentary difficulties, its deeds and its fortunes, is something far away, outside their lives, unable to affect them for good or ill.

Is not this too pessimistic, it may be asked. Cannot the Labour Government solve at least some of these problems? Alas, no. Several of the Government speakers have pointed out that they are taking over a bankrupt concern. That would not matter if they were taking it over as liquidators of capitalism. But they are put there to carry on the business.

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THE DISCUSSION IN THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

A BRIEF analysis of the discussions in the Russian Communist Party was given in *The World of Labour* in the February issue of THE LABOUR MONTHLY. It is now possible to reproduce some of the most important documents of the discussion.

First place must be given to the exhaustive resolution on Party organisation which was unanimously adopted by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Party and the Presidium of the Central Control Commission on December 5, 1923.

The resolution, after a rapid review of the position of the Party under the New Economic Policy and of its relations with the masses of the workers, comes straight to the question of a more democratic Party organisation—" Labour democracy "—

THE PARTY AND LABOUR DEMOCRACY

. . . The Party, in order to combat successfully the influence of the N.E.P. and to increase its capacity for action in every field, must proceed to a serious modification of its policy in the sense of a strict and methodical application of the principles of Labour democracy . . .

Labour democracy implies for all Communists freedom to examine and discuss openly the principal questions in Party life, as well as the election of officials and committees throughout the Party, from top to bottom. However, it does not include freedom to form fractions, which are always very dangerous for a governing Party, for they threaten the unity and stability of the government and the State apparatus.

It is obvious that the Party, a voluntary association of individuals on a determined ideological and practical basis, cannot suffer within itself the existence of groups whose ideology would be opposed to it and to the dictatorship of the proletariat . . .

. . . The directing organs of the Party must take heed of the opinions of the mass of Party members, and must not consider every criticism as a manifestation of a desire to form a fraction. They must not by such means confront conscientious and disciplined Communists with the dilemma of always keeping silence or of forming a fraction.

In any case, the Party could not be considered simply as an administrative machine: but on the other hand it could not be considered as a discussion club for all sorts of tendencies . . .

IMMEDIATE STEPS FOR REALISING LABOUR DEMOCRACY

(1) Thorough application, bearing in mind the restrictions already mentioned, of the principle of election of officials, particularly of nuclei secretaries. No one to be nominated for office against the will of his organisation.

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(2) Submission, exceptional circumstances apart, of all fundamental questions of Party policy for the consideration of the nuclei and the mass of the members: increase in discussion-circles: no appeal to "discipline" to prevent the right of consideration of questions and the adoption of resolutions.

(3) Attention to recruiting of new members from among the masses, especially the industrial workers.

(4) Special care to be taken that comrades directly in contact with the Communist masses have a correct and profound knowledge of Party policy.

(5) Party organs to report on their activity to the body electing them and to the mass of the members.

(6) Increase in Communist education, while avoiding to give it a dry and official character, among the Party masses and especially among the Youth and among Women.

(7) Members to be shown the necessity for mutual exchange of experiences. Organisation, around the Central Committee, and regional, provincial, and district committees, of periodical conferences of responsible Party workers in every field.

(8) Development of information among members by means of the Press and also by visits from members of the Central, regional, provincial, &c., committees.

(9) Development in the Press of the section "Party Life."

(10) Half-yearly provincial and All-Russian conferences of the Party to be proposed at the next Party Congress . . .

THE CONTROL COMMISSIONS

. . . One of the important tasks of the Control Commissions at the present moment is to fight against the bureaucratisation of the Party apparatus and activity, as well as to seek out the responsible Communists who are obstructing the realisation of the principle of Labour democracy within the Party organisations of which they have the direction . . .

THE PARTY AND ECONOMIC WORK

Our Party has the inestimable advantage of possessing, from top to bottom of the ladder, members in every branch of the economic system. Their extremely wide experience should be made use of for the elaboration of a system of effective direction of economic work by the Party . . . To this end, it is necessary to bring the Communist nuclei more in contact with productive work; to demand from Communist technicians and administrators reports and regular information on their activity; to organise periodical conferences between Communists in enterprises grouped—as in a trust—in the same economic union, as well as conferences of Communist technicians and administrators with other members of the Party not engaged in economic work. The results of these conferences should be communicated to the nuclei by their representatives in special reports. It is necessary to take a much wider account than heretofore of the experience and the information of the smaller nuclei.

PARTICIPATION OF THE MASSES IN THE WORK OF THE PARTY

The institution of worker-correspondents must be supported by every possible means, and the most careful attention must be paid in order that it shall not become official and bureaucratic in character. The Communist and Soviet Press must pay the greatest attention to the claims and proposals of the masses.

In the Soviet elections care should be taken to discover new men, to secure

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the election, together with Communists, of capable non-party workers, who shall be encouraged to take up active work . . .

The custom of big non-party conferences must be developed, and the developed of all sorts of voluntary associations fostered . . .

It is necessary to organise more frequently open meetings of the nuclei, and to make use of these to select *cadres* of non-party workers who will be active auxiliaries of the Communist Party.

The dangers of bureaucracy within the Party are mentioned in this resolution, and it is against these dangers that the attacks of the opposition have been chiefly directed. Trotzky has been particularly outspoken in his denunciation of bureaucracy. In one article, after pointing out that only one-sixth of the Party membership consisted of workers actually in the factory, the rest being engaged in various kinds of administrative work, in the army, studying, or rural work, he said :—

> The source of bureaucracy is to be found in the growing concentration of the attention and the forces of the Party in governmental institutions and machinery, and in the slowness of industrial development.
>
> This state of affairs must make us realise the dangers of the bureaucratic degeneration of the leading elements of the Party. It would be sheer fetishism to believe that these last, solely because they have been brought up in the best revolutionary school in the world, have in themselves an infallible guarantee against every danger of a narrowing of ideology and degeneration into opportunism. History is made by men, but men do not always make history consciously, their own included. Ultimately, the question will be resolved by two supreme factors of international importance : the progress of the revolution in Europe and the rapidity of our economic development. But to adopt the fatalistic attitude of putting all the responsibility on these objective factors would be a grave error . . .

In a letter to the Central Committee of the Party on December 8, Trotzky returned to the charge. He particularly emphasised the danger of what he called an " ossification " of the " Old Guard " of the Party—which would lead to its alienation from the younger generation, with very serious results :—

> A degeneration of the " Old Guard " is to be observed several times in history. Let us take the most recent and most striking example : the leaders and the parties of the Second International. We know perfectly well that Wilhelm Liebknecht, Bebel, Singer, Victor Adler, Kautsky, Bernstein, Lafargue, Guesde, and others were the direct and immediate disciples of Marx and Engels. We know, however, that all these leaders—some partially, others totally—have, in the atmosphere of parliamentarism and under the influence of the automatic development of the party and trade union machinery, degen-

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> erated towards opportunism. On the eve of the imperialist war, we saw with remarkable distinctness, how the formidable social democratic apparatus, protected by the authority of the old generation, became the most powerful hindrance to revolutionary development. And we must say—we, the "Old Guard"—that our generation, which of course plays the leading rôle in the Party, is in no way forearmed against a gradual and imperceptible weakening of the proletarian and revolutionary spirit, if the Party tolerates the further development of bureaucratic methods which transform the young generation into a passive object of education, and inevitably alienate the Party machine and the mass of the membership, the old and the young. Against this undoubted danger there is no means other than a serious and fundamental new orientation towards Party Democracy with a continually increasing attraction of the workers from the workshops to the Party . . .
>
> The present state of mind of the younger generation, which, as is quite clear to every reflecting Party member, is in the highest degree symptomatic, has been promoted precisely by these methods employed for the sake of "absolute tranquillity," which are formally condemned by the resolution unanimously adopted by the Political Bureau. In other words, "absolute tranquillity" has itself promoted the danger of an increasing alienation between the leading Party circles and the younger members of the Party, *i.e.*, of its overwhelming majority. The tendency of the apparatus to think and to decide for the whole Party is apt to lead to the authority of the leading circles becoming based solely upon tradition. The respect for Party tradition is undoubtedly a very necessary element of Party education and cohesion; but it can be a vital factor only if it is constantly nourished and strengthened by means of an independent and active control of the Party tradition, that is to say, by the collective elaboration of the policy of the Party at the present moment. Without this activity and initiative, respect for tradition might degenerate into a purely official sentiment, into a *form without content*.

The defenders of the Party machine, particularly Stalin, accused the opposition of forming an illegal group or fraction within the Party : and round this question of groups and fractions—whether their formation in special circumstances is justified, and what exactly constitutes a group or a fraction—the real heat and vehemence of the discussion has centred.

Here again Trotzky stated the position clearly. He said :—

> We are the only party in the country, and in the present period of the dictatorship it could not be otherwise. The different needs of the working class, of the peasantry, of the State machine and its administrators react upon our Party, through which they seek to find political expression. The difficulties and contradictions inherent in our epoch, the temporary disagreement of the interests of different sections

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> of the working class, or of the working class and the peasantry, react upon the Party through its nuclei among the workers and the peasants, among the young students and in the State machine. The various shades of opinion, the periodical differences of outlook may express the remote pressure of definite social interests, and may, in certain circumstances, form permanent groups: these last may, in time, sooner or later, take the form of organised fractions which, opposing as such the rest of the Party, are even more liable to external pressure. Such is the logical evolution of groups at a time when the Communist Party is obliged to monopolise the direction of political life.
>
> What is the result? If you do not want any fractions there must be no permanent groups; if you do not want any permanent groups all temporary groups must be avoided; finally, in order to avoid any temporary groups, there must be no differences of opinion at all—for wherever there are two opinions, groups inevitably form. But how, on the other hand, *can* differences of opinion be avoided in a Party, of half-a-million members, which is governing the country under exceptionally complicated and difficult conditions? That is the fundamental contradiction in the very position of the Party of proletarian dictatorship, which cannot be glossed over by mere formalities.

As a final answer to the continued denunciations of the opposition as a fraction, Trotzky pointed out that—

> If fractions are dangerous—and they are—it is criminal to shut one's eyes to the danger which is presented by the *conservative bureaucracy which is itself a fraction.* It was precisely against this danger that the resolution of the Central Committee was in the first place directed.

At the Party Congress, which opened on January 16, the resolution on organisation and a second resolution on economic policy (which elaborated in detail the economic points touched upon by the resolution on organisation) were carried unanimously. The opposition confined itself to reproaching the Central Committee with not carrying out the proposals of previous congresses on the subject of democracy within the Party: it also demanded a still more definite and far-reaching economic plan. A resolution was passed, with only two dissentients, declaring that the discussion, in so far as it led to an increased activity in the internal life of the Party, had been of the utmost value.

The death of Lenin, which came immediately after the close of the Congress, is generally expected to have a profound effect in closing the ranks of the Party more firmly than ever, and so making the " new policy " of democracy within the Party a success.

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The World of Labour

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GERMANY

The Crisis in Trade Unionism

THE acute economic crisis through which Germany has been passing during the last few months has been reflected most noticeably in the situation of the German Trade Union Movement. The actual conditions of the workers who form that movement may be briefly summarised: wages at a coolie level, the eight-hour day in process of disappearance before the attack of the employers and wide-spread unemployment. On October 27 last an official estimate gave 19.1 per cent. of the German workers as unemployed. Further, the same report estimated nearly 40 per cent. as on short time. An *Observer* correspondent, on January 6, quoted similar official reports as estimating the number of unemployed on the "dole" at 3,500,000. In early February the number of registered unemployed was 5–6,000,000.

These conditions of extreme depression have produced a slump in union membership comparable to the slump experienced in this country since 1920-21. The union leaders have been powerless to stop this slump: and indeed there can be no doubt that their timid leadership, their lack of any forward policy, has materially contributed to the disillusionment of the worker with the trade unions, and the consequent big desertions from the union ranks.

Early in December last the financial position of many of the unions was so serious that they were compelled to reduce their staffs by 50 per cent. Several unions were not even in a position to pay salaries to the reduced staffs.

It is reported that attempts have already been made by trade union leaders to declare the trade union movement "neutral" towards all political parties. Such an attempt can only mean that, knowing the discredit into which the Social-Democratic Party has fallen among the workers, the trade union leaders are hoping to regain lost ground by creating the impression that they have broken with the Social-Democrats. The falseness of any policy of "neutrality" in Germany to-day is sufficiently obvious.

Realising the gravity of the situation, the left-wing opposition in the A.D.G.B. (the German Federation of Trade Unions) held a conference of local trade union committees at Weimar, on November 25-26, 1923. The opposition movement is centred round the Communists in the trade unions, but comprises also many left-wing Social-Democratic workers, particularly in Central Germany, and left-wing non-party workers generally. In spite of the

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official denunciation of the conference as a "typical Communist manœuvre," it was very well attended. Some 273 delegates were present, 225 of these representing 181 local committees of the A.D.G.B., and forty-two of the remainder representing various trade unions and unemployed workers' councils. Over forty local committees, who were unable to send delegates, wrote expressing their solidarity with the conference. Other reports put the number of local committees represented variously at 250 or 360.

A Committee of Action was elected to approach the Executive Committee of the A.D.G.B. with the following demands:—

(1) An entire break with the present policy of class collaboration.
(2) (*a*) Defence of the right to strike, the rights of the Factory Councils, and the eight-hour day.
(*b*) Securing of real wages on a pre-war level.
(*c*) Work or full maintenance for the unemployed.
(*d*) Defence of existing social legislation which is being threatened.
(*e*) Abolition of the tax on wages.
(*f*) The restriction of production by the employers to be combated by every possible means.
(3) Reorganisation of the Trade Union Movement.
(4) Immediate summons of a special Trade Union Congress to consider these demands and the most appropriate measures for carrying them out.

It was further decided that, in the event of the A.D.G.B. refusing to summon this special congress, the Committee of Action should take this task upon itself.

The conference drew up a series of detailed proposals for trade union reorganisation. We reproduce an extract from the preamble to these proposals:—

> The trade organisations of the working class, founded in the period when capitalism was developing and not yet powerfully concentrated, have not developed with the same rapidity as capitalism. The employers have lost no time in creating powerful political organisations and industrial combinations thanks to which they dictate the policy of the bourgeois State and its attack on the working class. Yet the reformist trade union leaders have continually opposed any transformation of the trade unions into powerful industrial federations corresponding to those which have been formed by the capitalists.
>
> The frightful situation in which the working class finds itself at the present moment forces on us the imperative duty of re-forming the German trade unions into fighting organisations, following this principle : reorganisation of the whole trade union movement from top to bottom, on a basis of democratic centralisation. There must be firm discipline, and full authority freely granted to a central directing body of the workers' struggle. Industrial federations must be formed on the basis of one federation for each industry, with all its factories and workshops.

It is proposed that all the workers at any given factory shall be members, irrespective of grade or craft, of the appropriate Industrial Federation: but within the federation there shall be craft and grade sections for the consideration of special problems and interests. The basis of organisation is to be the factory or works council and the factory delegates (shop stewards).

While putting forward these proposals for trade union reorganisation, the conference made it quite clear in its manifesto that they were only a means to

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an end; and that until the German workers had seized power there could be no real or lasting improvement in their position.

The A.D.G.B. Executive has refused to summon a special congress, and the opposition are accordingly making preparations for summoning it themselves, as already decided.

All over Germany the Weimar Conference has given rise to intense discussion among all sections of the workers, and the programme set forth has received general support. All the organisations represented at Weimar have ratified the conference decisions. Throughout the Ruhr, the Rhineland, and Westphalia, the local trade union committees have rallied to the Weimar programme. The same is reported in Central Germany. From industrial centres everywhere in Germany, such as (to name but a few) Kiel, Stettin, Friedrichshafen, Cologne, Darmstadt, come similar reports. At a big Rhenish-Westphalian Works Councils Congress, attended by 1,000 delegates, held at Solingen on December 16, the Weimar programme was unanimously adopted. In Berlin the printers, the metalworkers, the butchers, the woodworkers, have declared themselves for the programme.

The adoption of the Weimar programme has coincided with numerous opposition and Communist successes in Trade Union elections, as for instance in the Essen Metalworkers' Federation and the Düsseldorf, Münster and Elberfeld woodworkers. In the case of the Essen Metalworkers it is reported that the membership of the Federation has increased, under left-wing leadership, by something like 100 per cent. in the last few months.

With the growth and spread of the opposition movement, the leaders of the A.D.G.B. are resorting to the old tactics of exclusion. Already it is reported that the Solingen local committee has been excluded, and also that all trade union organisations which took part in the Solingen Works Councils Congress have been ordered to disavow the Weimar programme, under pain of exclusion. It is expected that the A.D.G.B. will threaten to exclude all unions and local committees taking part in the special congress which the opposition is preparing to summon.

On January 20 a meeting of the National Council of the A.D.G.B. declared that the Trade Union opposition was simply a Communist intrigue to split the movement. It followed up this declaration by approving the exclusion of the Remscheid local Trade Union Committee, on the ground that it had a Communist majority. Further, it was decided that any Trade Union organisation which took its stand with the opposition should be *ipso facto* excluded from its Union and from the A.D.G.B.

FRANCE

Communist Congress

THE Third Congress of the French Communist Party was held at Lyons from January 20-23. There were 148 delegates present representing eighty-four local Party Federations. No membership figures were given in the published reports, but a hostile source gives 30,000, which may be taken as an underestimate.

This Congress was the first held since the "purification" of the Party in the winter of 1922-23, after the Fourth World Congress of the Communist

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International, when the old "Socialist" politicians and intellectuals, typified by Frossard, left the Party.[1] The reports showed that as a result of the purification the Party had greatly strengthened its position, both as regards its internal organisation, and also as regards its influence among the French workers.

A vigorous campaign against the Ruhr occupation had been carried on throughout the year, and the Party had suffered considerable persecution at the hands of the Government as a result. The agitation for an amnesty for political prisoners had been effective in forcing the Government to release André Marty, the leader of the famous Black Sea mutiny in 1919. Close contact had been maintained with the revolutionary German workers.

Pierre Monatte, reporting on the Trade Union question, declared that, while a good beginning had been made, the Party was still only just beginning work in the Trade Unions. It was essential to work for the re-union of the Trade Union movement, and also to open a campaign for organising the masses of unorganised workers. He stated that, while both the reformist C.G.T. (General Confederation of Labour) and the revolutionary C.G.T.U. (Unitary Confederation of Labour) between them only comprised 800,000 members, there were 12,000,000 workers in France : 7,000,000 workmen, 3,000,000 working women and 2,000,000 agricultural workers.

On the side of organisation the discussion turned chiefly on methods of ensuring better contact between the Party centre and the localities, and also on the proposal for the re-organisation of the Party on the basis of workshop nuclei.

Reports were also given on work among the peasantry and the Co-operatives and also on the Colonial question. The circulation of *l'Humanité*, the central organ of the Party, increased by 50,000 during the year, and is now stabilised at about 200,000.

The chief political discussion centred on the part to be played by the Party in the general election which is due this May. To the demand for a "Left-wing" coalition (*Bloc des Gauches*) against Poincaré and the reactionary *Bloc National*, the Party has replied, and the Congress unanimously confirmed their reply, with the demand for a workers' and peasants' coalition (*Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan*) against all bourgeois parties, whether nominally "Left" (*i.e.*, Liberal) or reactionary. The danger of preoccupation with elections and Parliament leading to reformism was fully discussed. As a precaution against this it was decided that nine-tenths of the Party candidates should be either workers actually engaged in industry or working peasants. No Party official or member of the staff of *l'Humanité* is to be eligible as a candidate, save in exceptional cases.

On the question of "electoralism," as it is called, the view of the Congress was well expressed in the letter sent to the Congress by the Communist International :—

> For the reformists, Parliament is the chief instrument for improving the system, it is the chief means of progress . . . For Communists, Parliament is an expression of class antagonisms. It simply records external happenings, and serves to disguise the exploitation of the masses with democratic phraseology. Parliament is an instrument used by one class to oppress another. The Communist only enters it to aid from within it the extra-parliamentary struggle . . .

[1] The Labour Monthly, February, 1923, Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 121.

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> Elections are only of importance for us in so far as they enable us, whilst the excitement of them is affecting millions of the population, to make ourselves better understood, to impress our demands and our programme more profoundly on the masses, to increase the popularity of our slogans.

In pursuit of the policy of the *Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan*, the Party had already, on December 17, 1923, addressed a letter to the French Socialist Party, which concluded by placing the following alternatives before the Socialist Party :—

> *Either* with the Communist Party, in order to establish a united struggle of the working class against the whole of the bourgeoisie, whether "Right" or "Left,"
>
> *Or* with the Radical Party against the Communist Party, which absolutely refuses to practise class collaboration.
>
> It is for you to decide whether fighting unity of the working-class is possible, by breaking off all collaboration with the liberal bourgeoisie, by cancelling the agreements already arranged, and by stopping all participation in the Press and in the meetings of the *Bloc des Gauches*.

No reply to this letter was received. Accordingly the Congress agreed to send a second letter to the Marseilles Congress of the Socialist Party, in which the Communist Party laid down three essential conditions for the realisation of the *Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan* :—

(1) That the *Bloc* must be realised nationally, and not simply according to local interests.

(2) That members of the Socialist Party must break *individually* with the *Bloc des Gauches*, stop writing in its Press, &c.

(3) That the Socialist Party should assist the Communist Party in endeavouring to re-unite the Trade Union movement.

Socialist Congress

The Congress of the French Socialist Party met at Marseilles from January 30 to February 3. The Party treasurer reported that 47,980 membership cards had been issued during the year, which presumably represents the nominal effective membership of the Party.

A pessimistic report was delivered on the position of the official organ of the Party, *Le Populaire*. This paper has only 6,500 subscribers, and its total circulation is not much more than 10,000 ; to keep it going at all, heavy subsidies are necessary. The previous Party Congress had guaranteed a subsidy of 370,000 francs, but so far only 175,000 francs had come in, and the paper found it necessary to obtain financial assistance from the Labour and Socialist International.

In the discussion on the International Longuet complained of its lack of activity. He was answered by Grumbach, a notoriously right-wing member of the Party, who said :—

> Our International is not and cannot be other than an atmosphere, rather than an instrument for immediate action. It is a Socialist League of Nations, and is paralysed by this fact, but it is a beneficent paralysis.

The question of electoral tactics occupied the first place in the Congress discussions. The chief need was held to be the overthrow of the *Bloc National*, and with this in view the discussion turned on the problem of electoral arrangements with the Liberals—the Radical and Radical-Socialist Parties. Opposition to any coalition with the Liberals found, in the words of the *New Leader*,

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" only the briefest and slightest expression." The general feeling of the Congress was in favour of an electoral coalition with the Liberals, but maintaining the independence and integrity of the Party programme.

Extreme Right-wing members of the Party, such as Grumbach and Paul Boucour, pointed out that in the long run an electoral coalition of this sort must involve a parliamentary alliance and even a coalition ministry. They regarded these eventualities favourably, and further desired a common electoral programme. Léon Blum replied that :—

> The Socialist Party cannot abandon the sacred trust of doctrine that its ancestors have left it. It cannot cease to be an opposition party if, after the elections, a purely Liberal government comes into power.

However, he followed this by immediately remarking that :—

> Socialist support will not be wanting for a government of the Left which acts vigorously against the Right, except in so far as such a government begins to lack reforming energy.

The Communist Party's invitation to form the *Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan* was rejected : though in the final resolution on electoral tactics, which was passed unanimously, it was agreed that, in certain localities, where such an arrangement would be more likely to defeat the *Bloc National* than an arrangement with the Liberals, the Socialist Party was prepared to enter into an electoral alliance with the Communists. As the conditions set forth by the Communist Party (see above) preclude the possibility of such local arrangements, it is clear that the effect of the resolution will simply be to create an electoral coalition with the Liberals—a coalition " without a common programme " for the purpose of overthrowing the *Bloc National.*

It is interesting to note that the Congress published a manifesto " To the *Democrats* and Workers of France," and that one delegate (a well-known co-operator) declared that :—

> The role of the Socialist Party is to attract the votes of those middle class elements who are becoming proletarianised, though it should remember that it is the party of the working class.

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BOOK REVIEWS

OIL AND WORLD POLITICS

The Oil Trusts and Anglo-American Relations. By E. H. Davenport and Sidney Russell Cooke. (Macmillan & Co. 7s. 6d.)

The World Struggle for Oil. By Pierre L'Espagnol de la Tramerye. Translated by Leonard Leese (George Allen & Unwin. 8s. 6d.).

IN the year 1920, François Delaisi, a brilliant French journalist of the left, wrote a book called *Le Pêtrole*, afterwards translated into English under the title *Oil: Its Influence on Politics*, in which he maintained the thesis that the national interests of France were endangered by her alternate dependency on American and British oil combines, and that in particular the San Remo oil agreement of April, 1920, had completely placed the French nation at the mercy of the English bourgeoisie. This thesis he maintained with much brilliance and a pleasing literary style. It was the thesis already set forth by Aristide Briand in the French Chamber some months before in his agonised speech on "The Oil of Mosul."

The book, in spite of a considerable number of inaccuracies, obtained considerable vogue, and so far working class students of oil in this country have largely had to depend upon it. The two new books published this winter, while they are themselves obviously influenced by Delaisi, are not very likely, simply because of their high price, to alter much the views spread by his book. Nevertheless, they contain a certain amount of information of one kind or another. Apart, however, from the sixty-five valuable pages of appendices contained in the book by Messrs. Davenport and Cooke, the information must be taken rather carefully. The authors are obviously biassed. Messrs. Davenport and Cooke consider Delaisi as a malicious traducer of the British oil interests, while M. de la Tramerye carries the French nationalism of Delaisi into extremes of sentimentality. Thus, for example, in his first page we find "Britain with her usual foresight, &c. . . . France alone remains behind, hesitates, changes her mind, and allows herself to be despoiled, not only of the regions of Mosul . . ."

In the end the nationalism of the Frenchman, a University hireling, becomes even more trying than the low calibre irony with which the British book is written. The British authors are further concerned to show that the Government ought to sell the Anglo-Persian Oil shares; and, indeed, their book appeared in a very timely way just when that proposal was being pushed a few months ago. Both books are politically valueless. There has not so far appeared any book on oil written from a working class point of view.

What exactly is the significance of the oil trusts? It is that they are imperialist monopolies constituting a sharply defined factor in the complex of capitalist interests that make up a modern imperialist power I say clearly defined because in this case almost more than in any other (since the collapse of the simple form of finance-capital of the German bourgeoisie prior to the war), it is possible to see exactly the part played by this particular factor, to estimate its resources in finance, in raw materials, in power of transportation and marketing, to apprehend exactly on what occasions and for what purposes the statesmen and politicians are its puppets and mouthpieces. Besides this, its

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unconcealed world-wide trustification have raised up against it the enmity of the small producers and representatives of a vanishing competitive capitalism. This enmity, it is true, has not stayed the onward march of the trusts, but it has resulted from time to time in public enquiries, commissions, and even anti-trust laws, all of which have thrown a fierce light on the operations of the oil companies.

The concentration of capital in each of the trusts reaches enormous figures, amounting in the case of the Standard and the Royal Dutch-Shell group to hundreds of millions of pounds. With these resources and with the banks and financial houses such as N. & M. Rothschild & Co. behind them they constitute so powerful a section of the finance oilgarchy that they can afford to laugh at all competitors. It is true that in the case of America, particularly when new fields like the Mid-Continent field and the Huntingdon Beach in California are opened up there is a rush of "wildcat" producers comparable to the gold rush to Klondyke thirty years ago. But these producers are merely oil peasants who must pay through the nose for pipe line transportation, refining, and marketing services, all of which are in the hands of the trusts. It is an actual advantage to the trusts that oil prospectors should sink money and develop fields for them to enter into possession thereof. For the trusts reap where they have not sown. Similarly the so-called " independent " marketing companies are simply cattle being fattened for the slaughter.

The surplus capital of the oil groups is continually being invested in exploration and opening up of oil fields all over the world.. To say " opening up " is rather an overstatement. Many of the fields are simply acquired and held for the future. Opening up would mean a lowering of price ; and none of the oil trusts forget the maxim of John D. Rockefeller that it was the business of an oil refiner to be able to maintain a steady price irrespective of supply or demand. Through this restriction of production all consumers of oil (eventually the working class) are grossly robbed.

With this necessity for keeping up the price of oil—necessity from the point of view of maintaining enormous profits—it might seem likely that one single international oil trust for the whole world would be evolved, that the fixing of prices in agreement would lead bit by bit to a complete disappearance of rivalry. It is not so. In the strict sense of the word there can be no such thing as an international oil trust so long as there are rival imperialisms. Temporary agreements there may be about prices, about markets, about spheres of influence and rights to bore in mandated territories, but these agreements will be limited, temporary, and precarious. The clash of interests of these imperialist monopolies continually emerges.

Not only are they a powerful factor in the struggles between the imperialist powers ; but in the one case where the workers of the world control the oil, in the Trans-Caucasian Republic, constituent of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, the struggle to exploit that oil field broke up Genoa, the only full conference of the European States that had been held in the last forty years.

But it is not in their bickerings at Genoa or Lausanne that their sinister power is obvious. There it appears mere rapacity. It is when this rapacity compels the Government of the United States to take measures than can only be backed by force, when the British Government, no step behindhand, is compelled

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to answer these measures and to back its answers with preparations of military force that the real significance of the oil trusts appear The clash of interests is so clear, that the duty of Governments to back up its own robbers seems equally clear, and even more clear the duty of the workers to kill one another in defence of these interests The lesson is, not simply that the rivalries of the great powers lead to an explosion, but that each fully developed imperialist trust is inevitably a driving force towards the next world war. R. P. A.

FIT TO BURN

Fit to Govern ! By "Iconoclast." (Leonard Parsons. 2s. 6d.)

ELSEWHERE in this issue of THE LABOUR MONTHLY is published a memoir of a great Socialist, in which Philips Price, while telling us much of the historic working-class revolution that Lenin led, omits to describe the colour of Lenin's eyes.

Such omissions do not occur in "Iconoclast's" study of some lesser Socialists. The eyes of the President of the Board of Education "have still the blue keenness of a boy's;" the First Commissioner of Works has a "mild eye;" the aggressive vitality of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster "speaks . . . in the glance of his eye;" the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Admiralty is "clean-looking, bright-eyed;" the Attorney-General has "thick dark eyebrows that over-arch his remarkable, dominant eyes;" the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies is "clear-eyed"; the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health has "striking, pale eyes," while the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour is "bright-eyed, with an alert tilt of head, a humorous curl of lip, and a noble sweep of brow—she often reminds one of a bird." And indeed this little volume rather reminds one of an aviary, where twenty-eight Labour Ministers may be observed flitting busily past the public view.

Labour leaders have now no longer need or occasion to present the publishers with miscellanies expounding "What We Want and Why." That period is passed, and it is now the turn of the sycophantic scribes to tell a wondering world "what they're like and how." The philosophy underlying this familiar literature is amply expressed by "Iconoclast" in the introduction to her new book where she states that the Labour Party "was brought into being mainly as the result of the work of J. Ramsay MacDonald." Happy the middle-class intellectual who can see a Labour Party ("its new constitution cleared of any special class basis") as the creation, not, of course, of a workers' movement, but of one heroic man to whose glory it shall for ever testify. Such a party with such a man passes the supreme test implied in the title to this book:

> . . . a Party becomes fit to govern when it throws up a leader recognised, inside the House of Commons and outside, as possessing the qualities of character, will, and intellect that enable him to speak not for a Party but for the nation. Throughout Europe, Mr. MacDonald is accepted as such a leader.

"Iconoclast" takes full journalistic advantage of the individual romantic interest provided by those Labour Ministers who "were born into poverty and escaped from it," and she tells thrillingly of such wonders as Mr. Clynes' "exceptionally sensitive feeling for words," whatever that may mean. They

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are apparently a faultless crew, except Mr. Shinwell ("the most effective lieutenant MacDonald had in the internal fight against Communism "), who must learn to "control his temper," and the "amazingly clever" Mr. Thomas, who has his "little foibles" and "may be vain," but

> the left wingers, who had previously said the harshest things about him, were conquered, as those who came up against him generally are, by the skill, geniality, vim, and good sportsmanship with which he conducted them through the all-night sitting on the Army Annual Bill.

Then there are those others "born and educated in comfort who believe that their own advantages can be generalised." They include General Thomson, whose "slight frame is tense with energy," Sir Patrick Hastings, who has "slim, silk-stockinged ankles" and "was one of three men who out-distanced all the rest of the Bar in terms of the fees they were earning," and Lord Arnold who "may be said to represent the 'City' in the Labour Ministry."

This last sentence offered with complacency indicates the same mentality that leads "Iconoclast" to rejoice in her belief that "MacDonald's opposition to Communism killed it in Britain and, ultimately in the Internationale," and in her knowledge that Mr. Snowden "saw Bolshevism as tainted to its roots."

"Iconoclast" damns with intended praise. Thus, Mr. F. W. Jowett, when he first came into the House of Commons, "took to his new environment as a duck takes to water; became in many respects the ideal private member." Or again, of Mr. Ben Spoor: "It is not for nothing that a man acquires personal popularity in the House of Commons." It is not. And neither is it for fighting unremittingly the battles of the working-class.

Such is the picture of the men, who, in the words of the *Topical Budget*, quoted proudly by "Iconoclast," have achieved "a revolution as important as that of Magna Charta." It is strange that so great a revolution should call forth no nobler tribute than "Iconoclast's" hurried hero-worship.

The book (rushed through the press within four weeks of Labour's accession to office) teems with enthusiastic errors, such as the assertion that Mr. Ammon, on the L.C.C., "defended Sunday games with the ardour of a keen cricketer," when, in fact, with all the fervour of a profound christian (as "Iconoclast" would have said, had she known) he voted against them.

The Cabinet may live up to "Iconoclast's" expectations. But it would take the Labour Movement a long time to live down such an effusion as *Fit to Govern!* were it to be widely circulated, and the Government's publicity agents might do well to remember that the credit of even worthy individuals can be damaged by biographers who debase the value of their criticism with inflated adulations.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The People's Year Book, 1924. Prepared by the Co-operative Press Agency. (Co-operative Wholesale Society, Manchester; Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, Glasgow. 3s., cloth; 2s., paper.)

The Birthright of Man. By Henry Lowenfield. (Leonard Parsons, 3s. 6d.)

Why Russia Should be Recognised. By W. P. Coates. With a Preface by Charles Trevelyan, M.P. (National "Hands off Russia" Committee.)

Education in the Factory. An account of the educational schemes and facilities at Cadbury Brothers, Limited. By R. W. Ferguson, B.Sc., A.R.C.S. (Publication Department, Bourneville. 6d.)

Russische Erzahlung. Volume II. By L. Ssejfulin, V. Tamarin, A. Jakowlew and W. Iwanow, with illustrations by Karl Holtz. (Carl Hoym Nachfolger Louis Cahnbley, Hamburg.)

Probleme der Deutschen Revolution. By G. Zinoviev. (Carl Hoym Nachfolger Louis Cahnbley, Hamburg.)

Rapports entre L'Internationale Syndicale Rouge et l'Internationale Communiste (Librarie du Travail, Paris. 50c.)

L' I.S.R. et l' Unite Syndicale. By A. Herclet. (Librarie du Travail, Paris. 75c.)

Les Anarchistes et le Mouvement Syndicale. By Andres Nin. (Librarie du Travail, Paris. 50c.)

Birthright. By Prof. T. L. Vaswani. (Ganesh & Co., Madras. Rs. 1.)

The Threefold Commonweaith. By Rudolph Steiner. (Anthroposophical Publishing Company, 2s.)

The Inversion of Science and a Scheme of Scientific Reformation. By Frederick Soddy, M.A., F.R.S. (Hendersons. 6d.)

Robert Owen: A Biography. By Frank Podmore. With forty-six illustrations and facsimiles. (Allen & Unwin. 16s.)

The Treachery of France. By C. J. C. Street, M.C., O.B.E. (mil.). (Philip Allan & Co. 5s.)

Wm. F. Dunne's Speech at the Forty-third Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labour, Portland, Oregon, 1923. *Labour Herald* Library, No. 9. (Trade Union Educational League, Chicago, Illinois. 5 cents.)

The Rule of the Land. Being a reprint of Chapter 17 from *The Problem af the War and its Solution.* By John E. Grant. (Commonwealth Land Party. 3d.)

The Restoration of Hope. By R. L. Outhwaite. (Commonwealth Land Party. 2d.)

Gandhi and Non-Violent Resistance: the Non-Co-operation Movement of India. Gleanings from the American Press compiled by Miss Blanche Watson, of New York City. (Ganesh & Company, Madras. Paper cover: Rs. 2.8.; England, 3s. 6d.; cloth: Rs. 3.)

The Mass Strike: the Political Party and the Trade Unions. By Rosa Luxemburg. Translated by Patrick Lavin. With a Preface by M. Boruta. (Marxian Educational Society, Detroit, Michigan. 25 cents.)

State Socialism After the War: A Retrospect of Reconstruction After the War, Embracing a Greater Democracy and Founded on the Teachings of Christ. By Thomas J. Hughes. (John Bale, Sons & Danielson. Second revised edition. 4s.)

Bloody American Capitalism: Its Murder of Labour. Being a reprint of a series of articles from the *Yorkshire Cotton Factory Times.* By Joe Walker. With a Foreword by W. T. Colyer. (Published by Socialist-Labour Press, Glasgow; Reformers' Bookshop, Bradford; the Author, Farsley, Leeds. 6d.)

The National Council of Labour Colleges—History, Report and Directory, 1924. (N. C. L. C., Edinburgh. 3d.)

The Ruhr. The History of the French Occupation: Its Meaning and Consequences. By Joseph King. With a foreward by A. G. Gardiner. (British Bureau for Ruhr Information. 6d.)

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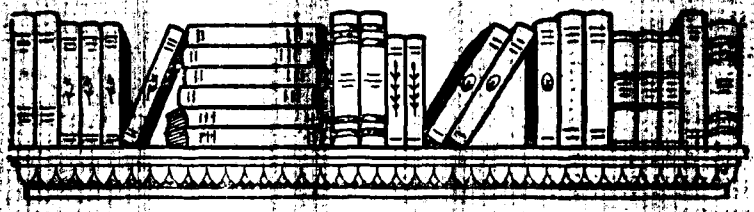

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Published by the Proprietors, the Trinity Trust, 162 Buckingham Palace Road, S.W.1, and Printed by the London Caledonian Press Ltd., 74 Swinton Street, Gray's Inn Road, W.C.1.—1925.

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